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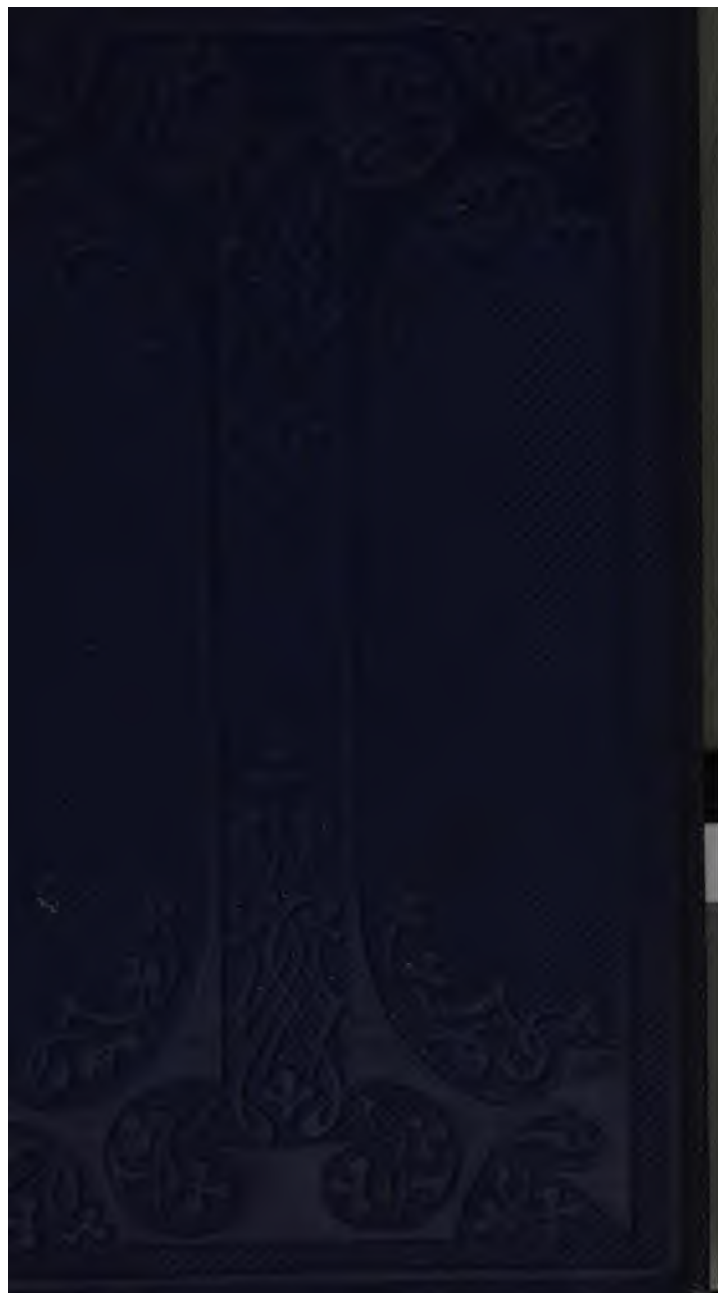
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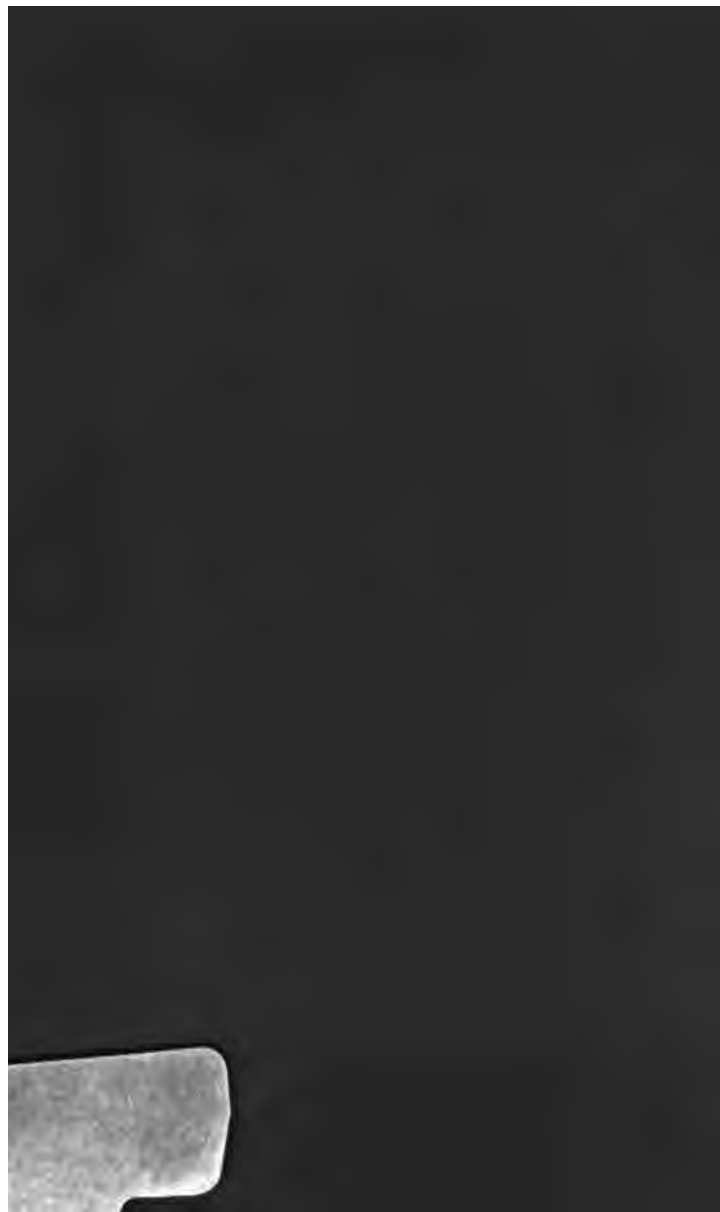
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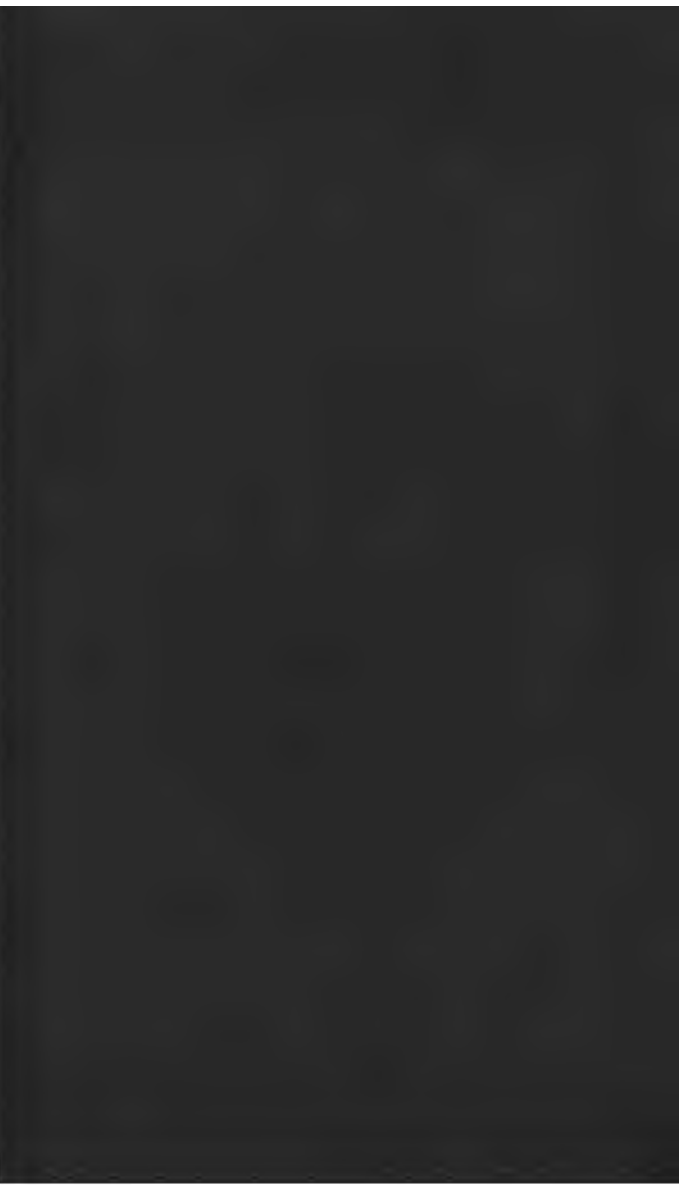
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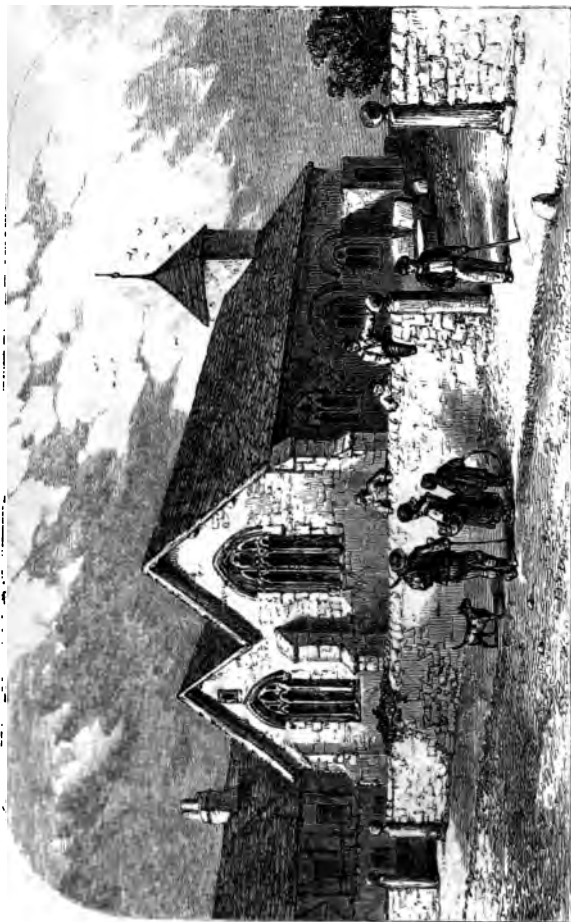
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"AND LIKE A HAMMER THAT BREAKETH"

"THE ROCK IN PIECES."

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Home Truths.

BEING MISCELLANEOUS ADDRESSES AND TRACTS,

BY THE

REV. J. C. RYLE, B. A.,

Rector of Helmingham, Suffolk.

ARRANGED, REVISED, AND CORRECTED SPECIALLY
FOR THIS EDITION.

SEVENTH SERIES.

*"If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare
himself to the battle?" (1 Cor. xiv. 8.)*

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Where Are Your Sins? *

"Make me to know my transgression and my sin."—JOB XIII. 22.

"Cleanse me from my sin."—PSALM LI. 2.

"The blood of Jesus Christ His Son, cleanseth us from all sin."—1 JOHN I. 7.

"Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in His blood."—ROM. III. 25.

READER,

The question which heads the following pages ought to stir up many thoughts in your heart. It concerns every man and woman born into the world. You ought never to rest till you can give it a satisfactory answer.—"WHERE ARE YOUR SINS?"

I ask you this day to look this question in the face. I ask you to give me your attention for a few minutes, while I try to enforce it on your conscience. A time draws nigh when the question *must* be answered. The hour cometh when all other questions shall seem like a

* An Annual Address for the year 1858.

drop of water in comparison with this. We shall not say, "Where is my money?"—or, "Where are my lands?"—or, "Where is my property?" Our only thought will be, "My sins! my sins!—Where are my sins?"

Reader, I am going to offer you a few remarks, which may help to throw light on the mighty question which is before your eyes. My heart's desire and prayer to God is, that this subject may be greatly useful to your soul. I entreat you to give it a fair reading. Do not put it on the fire. Do not tear it in pieces. Read it! Read it! Read it to the end! Who can tell but the Holy Ghost may employ it for the saving of your soul?

I. My first remark is this. *You have many sins.*

I say this boldly, and without the least hesitation. I know not who you are, or how the time past of your life has been spent. But I know from the word of God that every son and daughter of Adam is a great sinner in the sight of God. There is no exception. It is the common disease of the whole family of Adam, in every quarter of the globe. From the king on his throne, to the beggar by the roadside,—from the landlord in his hall, to the labourer in his cottage,—from the fine lady in her drawing-room, to the humblest maid-servant in the kitchen,—from the clergyman in the pulpit, to the little child in the Sunday-school,—we are all by nature guilty, guilty, guilty in the sight of God. "In many things we offend all."—"There is none righteous, no not one."—"All have sinned." "If we say that we

have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." (James iii. 2; Rom. iii. 10; v. 12; 1 John i. 8.) It is useless to deny it. We have all sinned many sins!

Reader, do you doubt the truth of these words? Then go and examine *the law of God*, as expounded by the Son of God Himself. Read with attention the fifth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel. See how the commandments of God apply to our words as well as to our actions, and to our thoughts and motives, as well as to our words. Know that "the Lord seeth not as man seeth: man looketh at the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh at the heart." In His sight the very "thought of foolishness is sin." (1 Sam. xvi. 7; Prov. xxiv. 9.)

And now turn to the history of *your own life*, and try it by the standard of this holy law. Think of the days of your childhood, and all your waywardness, and selfishness, and evil tempers, and perversity, and backwardness to that which is good.—Remember the days of your youth,—your self-will, your pride, your worldly inclinations, your impatience of control, your longing after forbidden things.—Call to mind your conduct since you came to man's estate, and the many departures from the right way, of which you have been guilty every year.—Surely in the face of your life's history, you will not stand up and say, "I have not sinned!"

And then turn to the history of *your own heart*. Consider how many evil things have gone through it, of which the world knows nothing at all.—Remember the thousands of sinful imaginations, and corrupt ideas,

which your heart has entertained, even while your outward conduct has been correct, moral, and respectable.—Think of the vile thoughts, and deceitful intentions, and false motives, and malicious, envious, spiteful feelings, which have walked up and down in your inward man, while those nearest to you never dreamed or guessed what was going on.—Surely in the face of your heart's history, you will not stand up and say, "I have not sinned!"

Reader, once more I ask you, Do you doubt what I am saying? Do you doubt whether you have sinned many sins?—Then go and examine the twenty-fifth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel. Read the concluding portion of that chapter, which describes the proceedings of the *judgment day*. Note carefully the grounds on which the wicked, at the left hand, are condemned to everlasting fire. No mention is made of great open acts of wickedness which they have committed. They are not charged with having murdered, or stolen, or borne false witness, or committed adultery. They are condemned for *sins of omission*! The mere fact that they have left undone things which they ought to have done, is sufficient to ruin their souls for ever. In short, a man's sins of omission alone are enough to sink him into hell!

And now look at yourself by the light of this wonderful passage of Scripture. Try to remember the countless things you have left undone, which you might have done, and have left unsaid, that you might have said. The acts of self-denying kindness, which you might have performed, but have neglected,—how many

they are! The good you might have done, and the happiness you might have caused, at very little trouble to yourself,—how vast is the amount of it! Surely, in the face of our Lord's teaching about sins of omission, you will not stand up and say, "I have not sinned!"

Reader, once more I ask, Do you doubt the truth of what I am saying? I think it quite possible that you do. I know something of man's exceeding blindness to his own natural state. Listen to me once more, whilst I ply your conscience with another argument. Oh! that God may open your eyes, and show you what you are!


Sit down, and take pen and paper, and count up the sins that you have probably sinned, since you first knew good from evil. Sit down, I say, and *make a sum*. Grant for a moment that there have been, on an average, fifteen hours in every twenty-four during which you have been awake, and an active and accountable being.—Grant for a moment that in each one of these fifteen hours you have sinned only two sins.—Surely you will not say that this is an unfair supposition. Remember, we may sin against God in thought, word, or deed. I repeat, it cannot be thought an extreme thing to suppose that in each waking hour you have, in thought, or word, or deed, sinned two sins. And now add up the sins of your life, and see to what sum they will amount.

At the rate of fifteen waking hours in a day, you have sinned every day thirty sins!—At the rate of seven days in a week, you have sinned two hundred and ten sins every week!—At the rate of four weeks in every month, you have sinned eight hundred and forty sins

every month!—At the rate of twelve months in every year, you have sinned ten thousand and eighty sins every year!—And, in short, not to go further with the calculation, every ten years of your life you have sinned, at the lowest computation, more than ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND SINS!

Reader, I do beseech you to look calmly at this sum. I defy you to disprove its correctness. I ask you, on the contrary, whether I have not entirely understated your case? I appeal to you, as an honest person, whether it be not true, that many an hour, and many a day in your life, you have sinned incessantly? I ask you confidently, whether the sum would not be far more correct, if the total number of your sins was multiplied ten-fold?—Oh! cease from your self-righteousness. Lay aside this proud affectation of “not being so very bad,” in which you are trying to wrap yourself up. Be bold enough to confess the truth. Listen not to that Old Liar, the devil. Surely in the face of that damning sum which I have just cast up, you will not dare to deny that “you have many sins.”

I leave this part of my subject here, and pass on. I sadly fear that many a reader will run his eye over what I have been saying, and remain unconvinced and unmoved. I have learned by mournful experience that the last thing a man finds out and understands, is his own state in the sight of God. Well saith the Holy Ghost that we are all by nature “blind,” and “deaf,” and “dumb,” and “asleep,” and “beside ourselves,” and “dead!” Nothing, nothing, nothing will ever convince man of sin but the power of the Holy Ghost.



Show him hell, and he will not flee from it. Show him heaven, and he will not seek it. Silence him with warnings, and yet he will not stir. Prick his conscience, and yet he will remain hard. Power from on high must come down and do the work. To show man what he really is, needs the Holy Spirit of God.

Reader, if you have any feeling of your own sinfulness, you ought to thank God for it. That very sense of weakness, wickedness, and corruption, which perhaps makes you uncomfortable, is in reality a token for good, and a cause for praise. The first step towards being really good, is to feel *bad*. The first preparation for heaven, is to know that we deserve nothing but *hell*. Before we can be counted righteous we must know ourselves to be miserable *sinner*s. Before we can have inward happiness and peace with God, we must learn to be ashamed and confounded because of our manifold transgressions. Before we can rejoice in a well-grounded hope, we must be taught to say, "Unclean! Unclean! God be merciful to me a sinner."

Reader, if you love your soul, beware of checking and stifling this inward feeling of your own sinfulness. I beseech you, by the mercies of God, do not trample on it, do not crush it, do not take it by the throat and refuse to give it your attention. Beware of taking the advice of worldly men about it. Treat it not as a case of low-spirits, disordered health, or anything of the kind. Beware of listening to the devil's counsel about it. Do not try to drown it in drink and revelling. Do not try to drive over it with horses, and dogs, and carriages, and field-sports. Do not try to purge it away

by a course of card-parties, and balls, and concerts. Oh! reader, if you love your soul, do not, do not treat the first sense of sin in this miserable fashion. Do not commit spiritual suicide,—do not murder your soul.

Go rather and pray God to show you what this feeling of sin means. Ask Him to send the Holy Spirit to teach you what you are, and what He would have you to do. Go and read your Bible, and see whether there is not just cause for your being uncomfortable, and whether this sense of being “wicked and bad” is not just what you have a right to expect. Who can tell but it is a seed from heaven which is one day to bear fruit in Paradise in your complete salvation? Who can tell but it is a spark from heaven which God means to blow up into a steady and shining light? Who can tell but it is a little stone from above, before which the devil’s kingdom in your heart is to go down, and a stone which shall prove the first foundation of a glorious temple of the Holy Ghost?—Happy indeed is that man or woman who can go along with my first remark, and say, “IT IS TRUE:—I HAVE MANY SINS.”

II. My second remark is this. *It is of the utmost importance to have our sins cleansed away.*

I say this boldly and confidently. I am aware of the multitude of things which are thought “important” in the world, and receive the first and best of men’s attention. But I know well what I am saying. I am bold to say that my Master’s business deserves to be placed before all other business. And I learn from my Master’s book that there is nothing of such importance to a man as to have his sins forgiven and cleansed away.

Remember, reader, *there is a God above you*. You see Him not in the city. Hurry and bustle,—trade and commerce, appear to swallow up men's minds.—You see Him not in the country. Farming and labouring go on in regular course, and seed-time and harvest never fail. But all this time there is an eternal Eye looking down from heaven and seeing all that men do,—an eye that never slumbers and never sleeps. Yes! there is not only a Queen, and a government, and a landlord, and a master, to be remembered. There is One higher, far higher than all these, who expects His dues to be paid. That one is the most high God.

This God is a God of infinite *holiness*. He is of purer eyes than to look upon iniquity, and cannot bear that which is evil. He sees defects and infirmities where you see none. In His sight the very heavens are not clean.—He is a God of infinite *knowledge*. He knows every thought, and word, and action of every son of Adam's children. There are no secrets hid from Him. All that we think, and say, and do, is noted down and recorded in the book of His remembrance.—He is a God of infinite *power*. He made all things at the beginning. He orders all things according to His will. He casts down the kings of this world in a moment. None can stand against Him when He is angry.—Above all, He is a God in whose hands are our lives and all our concerns. He first gave us being. He has kept us alive since we were born. He will remove us when He sees fit, and reckon with us according to our ways. Such is the God with whom we have to do.

Reader, think of these things. Surely when you consider you will be afraid. Surely you will see it is of the utmost importance to have your sins cleansed away. Surely you will inquire, "How do matters stand between me and God?"

Remember, furthermore, that *death is before you*. You cannot live always. There must be an end, one day, of all your scheming and planning, and buying and selling, and working and toiling. A visitor will come to your house who will take no denial. The king of terrors will demand admission, and serve you with notice to quit. Where are the rulers and kings who governed millions a hundred years ago? Where are the rich men who made fortunes and founded houses? Where are the landlords who received rents, and added field to field? Where are the labourers who ploughed the land and reaped the corn? Where are the clergymen who read services and preached sermons? Where are the children who played in the sunshine as if they would never be old? Where are the old men who leaned on their sticks and gossipped about the days when they were young? There is but one answer, They are all dead, dead, dead! Strong, and beautiful, and active as they once were, they are all dust and ashes now. Mighty and important as they all thought their business, it all came to an end. And we are travelling the same way! A few more years, and we also shall be lying in our graves!

Reader, think of these things. Surely when you consider your latter end you will not think the cleansing away of sin a light matter. Surely you will see some-

thing in the question, "Where are your sins?" Surely you will consider, "How am I going to die?"

Remember, furthermore, that *resurrection and judgment await you*. All is not over when the last breath is drawn and your body becomes a lump of cold clay. No! all is not over! The realities of existence then begin. The shadows will have passed away for ever. The trumpet shall one day sound and call you forth from your narrow bed. The graves shall be rent asunder, and their tenants shall be summoned forth to meet God. The ears that would not obey the church-going bell shall be obliged to obey that summons. The proud wills that would not submit to listen to sermons, shall be compelled to listen to the judgment of God. The great white throne shall be set. The books shall be opened. Every man, woman, and child, shall be arraigned at that great assize. Every one shall be judged according to his works. The sins of every one shall be answered for. And every one shall receive his eternal portion either in heaven or in hell!

Reader, think of these things. Surely in remembrance of that day you must allow that the subject I am upon deserves attention. Surely you must confess that it is of the utmost importance to have your sins cleansed away. Surely you will consider, "How am I going to be judged?"

I must speak out what is upon my mind. I feel great sorrow and trouble of heart about many men and women in the world. I fear for many who live in this so called Christian land. I fear for many who profess and call themselves Christians. I fear for many who

go to church or chapel every Sunday and have a decent form of religion. I fear that they do not see the immense importance of having their sins cleansed away. I can see plainly that there are many other things which they think far more *important*. Money, and land, and farms, and horses, and carriages, and dogs, and meat, and drink, and clothes, and houses, and marriages, and families, and business, and pleasure,—these, these are the sort of things which many evidently think the “first things.” And as for the forgiveness and cleansing away of their sins it is a matter which has only the second place in their thoughts.

See the man of business as he pores over his ledger and account books, and runs his eye over the columns of figures. See the man of pleasure as he tears over the country with his horses and dogs, or rushes after excitement at the races, the theatre, the card party, or the ball. See the poor thoughtless labourer as he carries off his hard-earned wages to the public-house, and wastes them in ruining both body and soul. See them all, how thoroughly they are in earnest! See them all, how they throw their hearts into what they are doing! —And then mark them all at Church next Sunday, listless, careless, yawning, sleepy, and indifferent, as if there were no God, and no devil, and no Christ, and no heaven, and no hell! Mark how evident it is that they have left their hearts outside the Church! Mark how plain it is that they have no real interest in religion! And then say whether it be not true that many know nothing of the importance of having their sins cleansed away. Oh! reader, take heed lest this be the case with you.

Reader, do you feel anything of the importance of being forgiven? Then, in the name of God, I call upon you to encourage that feeling more and more. This is the point to which we desire to bring all people's souls. We want you to understand that religion does not consist in professing certain outward duties, and going through certain outward forms. It consists in being reconciled to God, and enjoying peace with Him. It consists in having our sins cleansed away, and knowing that they are cleansed. It consists in being brought back into friendship with the King of kings, and living in the sunshine of that friendship.—Listen not to those who would fain persuade you, that if you only “go to church” regularly, you will of course go to heaven. Settle it rather in your mind, that true saving religion, such as the Bible teaches, is another kind of thing altogether. The very foundation of real Christianity is to know that you have many sins, and deserve hell,—and to feel the importance of having these sins cleansed away, in order that you may go to heaven.

Happy, says the world, are they who have plenty of property and fine houses! Happy are they who have carriages, and horses, and servants, and large balances at their bankers, and great troops of friends! Happy are they who are clothed in purple and fine linen, and fare sumptuously every day, who have nothing to do but to spend their money and enjoy themselves!—Yet what is the real value of such happiness? It gives no solid, real satisfaction, even at the time of enjoyment. It endures but for a few years. It only lasts till death comes in, like the hand at Belshazzar's feast, and breaks


up all. And then, in too many cases, this so-called happiness is exchanged for ETERNAL MISERY IN HELL.

“Blessed,” says the word of God, “are those whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered! Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity!—Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven! Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted! Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled!” (Psalm xxxii. 1, 2; Matt. v. 2. &c.)—Their blessedness shall never come to an end. Their happiness is no summer-dried fountain, just failing when need is the sorest. Their friends are no summer swallows, forsaking them, like Adonijah’s guests, the first moment that the trumpet sounds. Their sun shall never go down. Their joy shall bud in time, and bloom in eternity. Theirs, in a word, is true happiness, for it is *for evermore*.

Reader, do you believe what I am saying? It is all true. You will see one day whose words shall stand, the words of man or the word of God. Be wise in time. Settle it in your heart this very hour, that the most important thing that man can attend to is the cleansing and forgiveness of his sins.

III. My third remark is this. *You cannot cleanse away your own sins.*

I make this statement boldly and confidently. Startling as it sounds to the natural heart, I lay it down as a piece of undeniable scriptural truth. In spite of all



the Pharisees, and Roman Catholics, and Socinians, and Deists, and idolators of human reason and human power, I unhesitatingly repeat my assertions.—Man's sins are many and great. It is of the utmost importance that these sins should be cleansed away. Man's guilt, in the sight of God, is enormous. Man's danger of hell, after he dies, is imminent and tremendous. And yet man cannot cleanse away his own sins. It is written, and it is true, "By deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified." (Rom. iii. 20.)

It will not cleanse away your sins *to be sorry for them*. You may mourn over your past wickedness, and humble yourself in sackcloth and ashes. You may shed floods of tears, and acknowledge your own guilt and danger. You may,—you must,—you ought to do this. But you will not by so doing wipe out your transgressions from the book of God. **SORROW CANNOT MAKE ATONEMENT FOR SIN.**

The convicted criminal in a court of justice is often sorry for his offences. He sees the misery and ruin they have brought upon him. He mourns over his folly in not listening to advice and in giving way to temptation. But the judge does not let him off because he is sorry. The deed has been done. The law has been broken. The penalty has been incurred. The punishment must be inflicted, notwithstanding the criminal's tears.—Reader, this is precisely your position in the sight of God. Your sorrow is right, and good, and proper. But your sorrow has no power whatever to cleanse away your sins. It needs something more than penitence to take the burden off your heart.

It will not cleanse away your sins *to mend your life*. You may reform your conduct, and turn over a new leaf. You may break off many evil habits, and take up many good ones. You may become, in short, an altered man in all your outward behaviour. You may, —you must,—you ought, to do so. Without such change no soul ever was saved. But you will not, by so doing, wipe away one particle of your guilt in God's sight. REFORMATION MAKES NO ATONEMENT FOR SIN.

The bankrupt tradesman who owes ten thousand pounds, and has not ten shillings to pay, may resolve to become a reformed character. After wasting his whole substance in riotous living, he may become steady, temperate, and respectable. It is right and proper that he should be so, but this will not satisfy the claims of those to whom he owes money. Once more I say, this is precisely your case by nature in the sight of God. You owe Him ten thousand talents, and have nothing to pay. To-day's amendments are all very well, but they do not wipe away yesterday's debts.—It requires something more than amendment and reformation to give you a light heart and to set your conscience free.

It will not cleanse away your sins *to become diligent in the use of the forms and ordinances of religion*. You may alter your habits about Sunday, and attend services from morning to night. You may take pains to hear preaching on week-days, as well as on Sundays. You may receive the Lord's Supper on every possible occasion, and give alms, and keep fasts. It is all very well as far as it goes. It is a right and proper thing to attend to

your religious duties. But all the means of grace in the world will never do you any good, so long as you trust in them as saviours. They will not bind up the wounds of your heart, and give you inward peace. **FORMALITY CANNOT MAKE ATONEMENT FOR SIN.**

A lantern on a dark night is a very useful thing. It can help the traveller to find his way home. It can preserve him from losing his path, and keep him from falling into danger. But the lantern itself is not the traveller's fireside. The man who is content to sit down in the road by the side of his lantern, must never be surprised if he dies of cold. Reader, if you try to satisfy your conscience with a formal attendance on means of grace, you are no wiser than this traveller. It needs something more than formality to take the burden from your conscience, and to give you peace with God.

It will not cleanse away your sins *to look to man for help*. It is not in the power of any child of Adam to save another's soul. No bishop, no priest, no ordained man of any church or denomination has power to forgive sins. No human absolution, however solemnly conferred, can purge that conscience which is not purged by God. It is well to ask the counsel of the ministers of the Gospel when the conscience is perplexed. It is their office to help the labouring and heavy-laden, and to show them the way of peace. But it is not in the power of any minister to deliver any man from his guilt. We can only show the path that must be followed. We can only point out the door at which

every one must knock. It requires a hand far stronger than that of man to take the chains off conscience, and set the prisoner free.

The bankrupt who asks a bankrupt to set him up in business again is only losing time. The pauper who travels off to a neighbour pauper, and begs him to help him out of difficulties, is only troubling himself in vain. The prisoner does not beg his fellow prisoner to set him free. The shipwrecked sailor does not call on his shipwrecked comrade to place him safe ashore. Help in all these cases must come from some other quarter. Relief in all these cases must be sought from some other hand. Reader, it is just the same in the matter of cleansing away your sins. So long as you seek it from man, whether man ordained or man not ordained, you seek it where it cannot be found. You must go further. You must look higher. You must turn elsewhere for comfort. It is not in the power of any man on earth or in heaven to take the burden of sin from off a brother's soul. "None can by any means redeem his brother, nor give a ransom for him." (Psalm xlix. 7.)

Reader, thousands in every age have tried to cleanse themselves from their sins in the ways I have now described, and have tried in vain. Thousands, I doubt not, are trying at this very moment, and find themselves "nothing bettered, but rather worse." They are climbing up a steep precipice of ice, toiling hard and yet slipping backwards as fast as they climb.—They are pouring water into a cask full of holes, labouring busily, and yet no nearer the end of their work than when they began.—They are rowing a boat against a rapid stream,

plying the oar diligently, and yet in reality losing ground every minute.—They are trying to build up a wall of loose sand, wearing themselves out with fatigue, and yet seeing their work roll down on them as fast as they throw it up.—They are striving to pump dry a sinking ship. The water gains on them and they will soon be drowned.—Such is the experience, in every part of the world, of all who think to cleanse themselves from their sins. Reader, be warned to-day. Do not be one of them.

Beware, I do entreat you, of quack medicines in religion. Beware of supposing that penitence, and reformation, and formality, and priest-craft, can ever give you peace with God. They cannot do it. It is not in them. The man who says they can must be ignorant of two things. He cannot know the length and breadth of human sinfulness. He cannot understand the height and depth of the holiness of God. There never breathed the man or woman on earth who tried to cleanse himself from his sins and in so doing obtained relief.

Reader, if you have found out this truth by experience, be diligent to impart it to others. Show them as plainly as you can their guilt and danger by nature. Tell them, with no less plainness, the immense importance of having their sins forgiven and cleansed away. But then warn them not to waste time in seeking to be cleansed in unlawful fashions. Warn them against the specious advice of "Mr. Legality" and his companions, so vividly described in *Pilgrim's Progress*. Warn them against false remedies and sham medicines

for the soul. Send them to the old wicket-gate described in Scripture, however hard and rough the way may seem. Tell them it is "the old path and the good way," and that, whatever men may say, it is the only way to obtain cleansing of our sins.

IV. The fourth remark I have to make is this. *The blood of Jesus Christ can cleanse away all your sins.*

Reader, I enter on this part of my subject with a thankful heart. I bless God that after setting before you the awful nature of your spiritual disease, I am able to set before you an almighty remedy. But I feel it needful to dwell upon this remedy, for a few minutes. A thing of such wondrous efficacy as this blood ought to be clearly understood. There should be no vagueness or mystery in your ideas about it. When you hear of the "blood of Christ" you ought thoroughly to comprehend what the expression means.

The blood of Christ is that life-blood which Jesus shed when He died for sinners upon the cross. It is the blood which flowed so freely from His head pierced with thorns, and His hands and feet pierced with nails, and His side pierced with a spear, in the day when He was crucified and slain. The quantity of that blood may very likely have been small. The appearance of that blood was doubtless like that of our own. But never since the day when Adam was first formed out of the dust of the ground, has any blood been shed of such deep importance to the whole family of mankind.

It was blood that had been *long covenanted and promised*. In the day when sin came into the world, God

mercifully engaged that "the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head." One born of woman should appear one day, and deliver the children of Adam from Satan's power. That seed of the woman was our Lord Jesus Christ. In the day that He suffered on the cross, He triumphed over Satan and accomplished redemption for mankind. When Jesus shed His life-blood on the cross, the head of the serpent was bruised, and the ancient promise began to be fulfilled.

It was blood that had been *long typified and prefigured*. Every sacrifice that was offered up by patriarchs, was a testimony of their faith in a greater sacrifice yet to come. Every shedding of the blood of lambs and goats under the Mosaic law was meant to foreshadow the dying of the true Lamb of God for the sin of the world. When Christ was crucified these sacrifices and types received their full accomplishment. The true sacrifice for sin was at length offered. The real atoning blood was at length shed. From that day the offerings of the Mosaic law were no longer needed. Their work was done. They might be laid aside.

It was blood which was of *infinite merit and value* in the sight of God. It was not the blood of one who was nothing more than a singularly holy man, but of one who was God's own fellow, very God of very God. It was not the blood of one who died involuntarily, as a martyr to truth, but of one who voluntarily undertook to be the Substitute and Proxy for mankind, to bear their sins and carry their iniquities. It made atonement for man's transgressions. It paid man's enormous debt to God. It provided a way of righteous reconciliation

between sinful man and his holy Maker. It made a road from heaven to earth, by which God could come down to man, and show mercy. It made a road from earth to heaven, by which man could draw near to God, and yet not feel afraid. Without it there could have been no remission of sin. Through it God can be just and yet the justifier of the ungodly. From it a fountain has been formed, wherein sinners can wash and be clean to all eternity.

Reader, this wonderful blood of Christ, applied to your conscience, can cleanse you from all sin. It matters nothing what your sins may have been. "Though they be as scarlet they may be made like snow. Though they be red like crimson they can be made like wool." (Isaiah i. 18.) From sins of youth and sins of age,—from sins of ignorance and sins of knowledge,—from sins of open profligacy and sins of secret vice,—from sins against law and sins against Gospel,—from sins of head, and heart, and tongue, and thought, and imagination,—from sins against each and all of the ten commandments, from all these the blood of Christ can set us free. To this end was it appointed. For this cause it was shed. For this purpose it is still a fountain open to all mankind. That thing which you cannot do for yourself can be done in a moment by this precious fountain. **YOU CAN HAVE ALL YOUR SINS CLEANSED AWAY.**

In this blood all the *dead saints* have been cleansed hitherto, who are now waiting the resurrection of the just. From Abel, the first of whom we read, down to the last who has fallen asleep to-day, they have all

“washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” (Rev. vii. 14.) Not one has entered into rest by his own works and deservings. Not one has made himself clean before God by his own goodness and his own strength. They have all “overcome by the blood of the Lamb.” (Rev. xii. 11.) And their testimony in Paradise is clear and distinct: “Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.” (Rev. v. 9.)

By this blood all *the living saints* of God have peace and hope now. By it they have boldness to enter into the holiest. By it they are justified and made nigh to God. By it their consciences are daily purged and filled with holy confidence. About it all believers are agreed, however much they may differ on other matters. Episcopalians and Presbyterians, Baptists and Methodists,—all are agreed that the blood of Christ is that only thing that can cleanse the soul.—All are agreed that in ourselves we are “wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” But all are agreed that in the blood of Christ the chief of sinners can be made clean.

Reader, would you like to know what we ministers of the Gospel are ordained to do. We are not set apart for no other end than to read services, and administer sacraments, and marry people, and bury the dead. We are not meant to do nothing more than show you the Church, or ourselves, or our party. We are set for the work of showing men the blood of Christ, and except we are continually showing it, we are no true ministers of the Gospel.

Reader, would you like to know what is our heart's desire and prayer for the souls to whom we minister? We want to bring them to the blood of Christ. We are not content to see our Churches filled, and our ordinances well attended, our congregations numerous, and our cause outwardly flourishing. We want to see men and women coming to the great fountain for sin and uncleanness, and washing their souls in it that they may be clean. Here only is rest for the conscience. Here only is peace for the inward man. Here only is a cure for spiritual diseases. Here only is the secret of a light and happy heart. No doubt we have within us a fountain of evil and corruption. But, blessed be God, there is another fountain of greater power still, even the precious blood of the Lamb,—and, washing daily in that other fountain, we are clean from all sin.

V. The fifth and last remark I have to make is this. *Faith is absolutely necessary, and the only thing necessary, in order to give you an interest in the cleansing blood of Christ.*

Reader, I ask your special attention to this point. A mistake here is often ruinous to a man's soul. It is a great leak at the bottom of your Christianity, if you do not clearly see the true way of union between Christ and the soul.—That way is faith.

Church-membership and reception of the sacraments are no proof that you are washed in Christ's blood. Thousands attend a Christian place of worship, and receive the Lord's supper from the hands of Christian ministers, and yet show plainly that they are not cleans-

ed from their sins. Beware of despising means of grace, if you have any desire to be saved. But never, never forget that Church-membership is not faith.

Faith is the one thing needful in order to give you the benefit of Christ's cleansing blood. He is called a "propitiation through faith in his blood." "He that believeth on him hath everlasting life." "By him all that believe are justified from all things." "Being justified by faith we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." The wisdom of the whole world will never provide a better answer to an *anxious* inquirer than that which Paul gave to the Philippian jailor: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."—"Art thou convinced of sin?" says the Gospel. "Dost thou really see that thou hast many sins, and art deserving hell? Dost thou renounce all *hope* of cleansing thyself from thy sins by thine own power? Then thou art just the man for whom the Gospel provides comfort. Behold the atoning blood of Christ! Only trust in it, and this day thou shalt be freely pardoned. Only believe, and this very moment thy sins shall be cleansed away."—It is only "Believe and have." It is only "Believe and be clean." Let those who will call such doctrine rant and enthusiasm. I am bold to call it by another name. It is the "glorious Gospel" of the grace of God.

Reader, I ask you not to misunderstand my meaning in thus speaking of faith. I do not tell you that faith is the *only* mark of the man whose sins are cleansed away. I do not say that the faith which gives a man an interest in Christ's atoning blood, is ever found alone.

Saving faith is no barren, solitary grace. It is always accompanied by repentance and personal holiness.—But this I say confidently, that in the matter of giving the soul an interest in Christ, faith is the only thing required. In the matter of justification before God, faith, I repeat emphatically, stands entirely alone, Faith is the hand that lays hold on Christ. Faith begins, faith carries on, faith keeps up the claim which the sinner makes on the Saviour. By faith we are justified. By faith we bathe our souls in the great fountain for sin. By faith we go on obtaining fresh supplies of pardoning mercy all through our journey. By faith we live, and by faith we stand.

Reader, *nothing whatever besides this faith* is required, in order to your complete justification and cleansing from all sin. Let this sink deeply into your mind. Where is the man that desires to enjoy real comfort from the Gospel? Seek, I do entreat you, to have clear and simple views of the nature of saving faith. Beware of those dark, and confused, and muddy notions of faith, by which so many distress their souls. Dismiss from your mind the idea that faith is a mere act of the intellect. It is not assent to doctrines or articles. It is not belief of Paley's Evidences or Pearson on the Creed. It is simply the grasp of a contrite heart on the outstretched hand of an Almighty Saviour,—the repose of a weary head on the bosom of an Almighty Friend.—Cast away all idea of work, or merit, or doing, or performing, or paying, or giving, or buying, or labouring, in the act of believing on Christ. Understand that faith is not giving, but taking,—not paying, but receiv-

ing,—not buying, but being enriched. It is the eye that looks to the brazen serpent, and looking obtains life and health.—It is the mouth that drinks down the reviving medicine, and drinking receives strength and vigour for the whole body.—It is the hand of the drowning man which lays hold on the rope thrown to him, and laying hold enables him to be drawn up from the deep water safe and sound.—This, and nothing more than this, is the true idea of saving faith. This, and this only, is the faith that is required to give you an interest in the blood of Christ. Believe in this way, and your sins are at once cleansed away!

Reader, *nothing whatever except this faith* will ever give you any interest in Christ's atoning blood. You may go daily to Christ's Church. You may often use Christ's name. You may bow the head at the name of Jesus. You may eat of the bread and wine which Christ commanded to be received. But all this time, without faith, you have neither part nor lot in Christ. Without faith, so far as you are concerned, Christ's blood has been shed in vain.

I desire to enter my solemn protest against the modern notions which prevail on this solemn subject. I protest against the opinion which many now maintain, that any are saved by Christ excepting those who *believe*. There is much vague talk in some quarters about the "Fatherhood of God" and the "love of God," as if we who are called "Evangelical" denied these glorious truths. We do not deny them at all. We hold them as strongly as any. We give place to no man in this matter. But we utterly deny that God is the spiritual

father of any excepting those who are His *children by faith* in Christ Jesus. We utterly deny that men have a right to take comfort in God's love, except they *believe* on Him through whom that love has been manifested, even His dear Son. The atoning blood of the Son of God is the grand exhibition of God's love towards sinners. The sinner who desires to be saved, must have personal dealings with Him who shed that blood. By personal faith he must wash in it. By personal faith he must drink of it. By personal faith he must put in his own claim to all its blessings. Without this faith there can be no salvation.

Reader would you know the main objects that we ministers have in view in our preaching? We preach that you may *believe*. Faith is the thing that we desire to see produced in your souls. Faith is the thing that, once produced, we desire to see growing. We rejoice to see you coming regularly to hear the Gospel. We rejoice to see an orderly, well-behaved congregation of worshippers. But faith, faith, faith,—is the grand result which we long to see in your souls. Without faith we cannot feel comfortable about you. Without faith you are in imminent danger of hell.—According to your faith will be the strength of your Christianity. According to the degree of your faith will be the increase of your peace and hope, and the closeness of your walk with God. Reader, you will not wonder that there is nothing we care for so much as your believing.

I hasten to bring my remarks to a conclusion. I have tried to show you five things, and have endeavoured to set them before you in plain language. (1) I have

told you that you have many sins. (2) I have told you that it is of the utmost importance to have these sins cleansed away. (3) I have told you that you cannot cleanse away your own sins. (4) I have told you that the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin. (5) I have told you that faith only is needful, but absolutely needful, to give you any interest in Christ's blood. I have told you what I am firmly persuaded is God's own truth,—the truth on which I desire myself to live and die. I pray God that the Holy Ghost may apply this truth with mighty power to many souls.

Reader I will wind up all this subject by three words of parting application. Our years are passing quickly away. The night cometh, when no man can work. Yet a little time and our place in another world will be settled to all eternity. A few more years, and we shall all be either in heaven or in hell. Surely this fact alone ought to set us thinking. Bear with me while I try to turn your thoughts in a profitable direction. Bear with me, while as a friend and brother, I try to talk to you about your soul.

1. My first word of application shall be *a question*. I address it to all into whose hands this book may fall, without distinction or exception. It is a question which concerns deeply every man, woman, and child in the world, whatever be their rank or station. It is the question which forms the title of these pages:—“*Where are your sins?*”

Reader, remember, I do not ask you what you call yourself in religion. I do not ask you where you go,—or

whom you hear,—or to what party you belong,—or what are your peculiar opinions about church or dissent. I leave such matters alone. I am weary to see the enormous waste of time of which multitudes are yearly guilty in respect of these matters. I am for the realities and substance of Christianity. I want to fix your attention on the things which will look important in the hour of death and at the last day. And I say boldly, that one of the first questions which demand your notice, is the question I here put to you:—“ *Where are your sins?* ”

I am not asking what you intend, or mean, or hope, or resolve to aim at, at some future time. I leave all that to children and fools. To-morrow is the devil's day, but to-day is God's. And here, as in God's sight, this very day, while you are reading these pages, I ask you to find an answer to my question: “ *Where are your sins?* ”

Reader, I ask you to mark what I am going to say. I say it calmly, deliberately, advisedly, and with consideration. I tell you that at this moment there are only two places in which your sins can be, and I defy the wisdom of the world to find out a third.—Either your sins are UPON YOURSELF, unpardoned, unforgiven, uncleansed, unwashed away,—sinking you daily nearer to hell?—Or else your sins are UPON CHRIST, taken away, forgiven, pardoned, blotted out and cleansed away by Christ's precious blood!—I am utterly unable to see any third place in which a man's sins can possibly be. I am utterly unable to discover any third alternative. Forgiven or unforgiven,—pardoned or not

pardoned,—cleansed away or not cleansed,—this, according to the Bible, is the exact position of every one's sins. Reader, how is it with you? "*Where are your sins?*"

I do pray you to lay this question to heart, and never to rest till you can give it an answer. I do entreat you to examine your own state,—to prove your own spiritual condition,—and to find out how matters stand between you and God. Let the time past suffice for trifling and indecision about your soul. Give it up,—give it up,—give it up for ever.—Let the time past suffice for a mere formal, aimless, meaningless, comfortless religion. Lay it aside,—lay it aside,—lay it aside for ever.—Be real. Be thorough. Be in earnest. Deal with your soul as a reasonable being. Deal with it as one who feels that eternal interests are at stake. Deal with it as one who has made up his mind, and is determined to live in suspense no longer. Oh! resolve this very day to find an answer to my question:—"Where are your sins?" *Are they on yourself, or are they on Christ?*

2. My second word of application shall be *an invitation*. I address it to all who feel unable to give a satisfactory answer to the question at issue. I address it to all who feel sinful, and lost, and condemned, and unfit to die. It is that invitation which is the glory of the Gospel. I say to you, "*Come to Christ, and be cleansed in His blood without delay.*"

I know not what you may have been in your past life. It matters nothing. You may have broken every commandment under heaven. You may have sinned with

a high hand against light and knowledge. You may have despised a father's warnings and a mother's tears. You may have run greedily into every excess of riot, and plunged into every kind of abominable profligacy. You may have turned your back entirely on God, His day, His house, His ministers, His word. I say again, it matters nothing. Do you feel your sins? Are you sick of them? Are you ashamed of them? Are you weary of them? Then *come to Christ* just as you are, and Christ's blood shall make you clean.

I see you lingering, and doubting, and fancying the news too good to be true. I hear the devil whispering in your ear, "You are too bad,—you are too wicked to be saved." I charge you, in God's name, not to give way to such doubts. I remind you that Satan always was a liar. One time he told you it was "too soon" for religion,—and now he tells you it is "too late." I tell you confidently, that Jesus Christ is able to save to the uttermost all who come to God by Him. I tell you confidently, that He has received, cleansed, and pardoned thousands as bad as you. He never changes. Only come to Him by faith, and His blood shall cleanse you from all sin.

I can well fancy that you feel at a loss, and know not what to do. I can well believe that you do not see which way to turn, or what step to take, or in what manner to follow out my counsel. *I bid you go and say so to the Lord Jesus Christ!* I bid you seek some quiet solitary place, and pour out your heart before Him. Tell Him that you are a poor miserable sinner. Tell Him that you know not how to pray, or what to

say, or what to do. But tell Him that you have heard something about His blood cleansing a man from all sin, and entreat Him to think on you, and cleanse your soul. Oh! reader, take this advice,—and who can tell but you may say one day, “the blood of Christ does indeed cleanse a man from all sin.”

Reader, for the last time I offer my invitation. I stand in a life-boat alongside the wreck to which you are clinging, and I entreat you to come in. The day is far spent. The night is coming on. The clouds are gathering. The waves are rising. Yet a little time and the old wreck of this world will go to pieces. Come into the life-boat. Come in and be safe. Come to the blood of Christ, wash, and be clean. Come with all your sins to Christ, and cast them on Him. He will bear them away. He will cleanse them. He will pardon them.—Only believe and be saved.

3. My last word shall be *an exhortation*. I address it to all who have been taught by the Spirit to feel their sins, and have fled to the hope set before them in the Gospel. I address it to all who have discovered the grand truth that they are guilty sinners, and have washed in the blood of Christ in order to have their sins cleansed away. That exhortation shall be short and simple. I bid them “cling to Christ.”

Cling to Christ, I say, and never forget your debt to Him. Sinners you were, when you were first called by the Holy Ghost, and fled to Jesus. Sinners you have been, even at your best, from the day of your conversion. Sinners you will find yourselves to your dying hour,

having nothing to boast of in yourselves. Then cling to Christ.

Cling to Christ, I say, and make use of His atoning blood every day. Go to Him every morning as your morning sacrifice, and confess your need of His salvation. Go to Him every night, after the bustle of the day, and plead for fresh absolution. Wash in the great fountain—every evening after all the defilement of contact with the world. “He that is washed, needeth not save to wash his feet.” But his feet he needs to wash. (John xiii. 10.)

Cling to Christ, I say, and show the world how you love Him. Show it by obedience to His commandments. Show it by conformity to His image. Show it by following His example. Make your Master’s cause lovely and beautiful before men, by your own holiness of temper and conversation. Let all the world see, that he who is much forgiven is the man who loves much, and that he who loves most is the man who does most for Christ. (Luke vii. 47.)

Cling to Christ, I say, and have high thoughts of the atonement made by His blood upon the cross. Think highly of His incarnation and His example,—think highly of His miracles and His words,—think highly of His resurrection, and intercession, and coming again. But think highest of all of Christ’s sacrifice and the propitiation made by His death. Contend earnestly for the old faith concerning His atonement. See in the old doctrine that He died as a Substitute for sinners,—the only solution of a thousand passages in the Old Testament, and a hundred passages in the New. Never,

never be ashamed to let men know that you derive all your comfort from the atoning blood of Christ, and from His substitution for you on the cross.

Cling to Christ, I say lastly, and make much of the old foundation truths concerning salvation by His blood. These are the old friends to which our souls will turn at last in the hour of our departure. These are the ancient doctrines on which we shall lean back our aching heads, when life is ebbing away and death is in sight. We shall not ask ourselves then whether we have been Episcopalians or Presbyterians, Churchmen or Dissenters. We shall not find comfort then in new-fangled notions and human inventions,—in baptism and churchmembership, in sects and parties,—in ceremonies and forms. Nothing will do us good then but the blood of Christ. Nothing will support us then but the witness of the Spirit, that in the blood of Jesus we have washed, and by that blood have been made clean.

Reader, I commend these things to your notice. If you never knew these things before, may you soon become acquainted with them! If you have known them in time past, may you know them better for time to come! We can never know too well the right answer to the mighty question,—“*Where are your sins?*”

H Y M N .

I thought upon my sins, and I was sad,
My soul was troubled sore and fill'd with pain;
But then I thought on Jesus, and was glad,
My heavy grief was turn'd to joy again.

I thought upon the law, the fiery law,
Holy, and just, and good in its decree;
I look'd to Jesus, and in Him I saw
That law fulfilled, its curse endured for me.

I thought I saw an angry, frowning God,
Sitting as Judge upon the great white throne;
My soul was overwhelm'd—then Jesus shew'd
His gracious face, and all my dread was gone.

I saw my sad estate, condemn'd to die;
Then terror seiz'd my heart, and dark despair;
But when to Calvary I turned my eye,
I saw the cross, and read forgiveness there.

I saw that I was lost, far gone astray,
No hope of safe return there seem'd to be;
But then I heard that Jesus was the way,
A new and living way prepar'd for me.

Then in that way, so free, so safe, so sure,
Sprinkled all o'er with reconciling blood,
Will I abide and never wander more,
Walking along in fellowship with God.

H. BONAR.

Repent, or Perish !*

*“Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”—LUKE
xiii. 3.*

READER,

Do you see the words which head this page? Read them carefully, and ponder them well. They are taken from that Book which is the only rule of faith and practice,—the Bible. Reader, this little sentence contains matter of deepest importance to your soul. Give it the attention which it deserves. Turn not away from it. Sit down, and look it honestly in the face.

I can well believe that at first sight these words look stern and severe,—“Repent or perish !” “Except ye repent, ye shall all perish.”—I can fancy some one saying, “Is this the Gospel? Are these the glad tidings? Are these the good news of which ministers speak? This is a hard saying, who can hear it?”

But from whose lips did these words come? They

* The substance of this tract was originally delivered as a sermon, at Exeter Hall, in August, 1858.

came from the lips of One who loves us with a love that passeth knowledge, even Jesus Christ the Son of God. They were spoken by One who so loved us that He left heaven for our sakes,—came down to earth for our sakes,—lived a poor, humble life, for three and thirty years on earth for our sakes,—went to the cross for us, went to the grave for us, and died for our sins. The words that come from lips like these, must surely be words of love.

And, after all, what greater proof of love can be given than to warn a friend of coming danger? That father who sees his son tottering toward the brink of a precipice, and, as he sees him, cries out sharply, "Stop, stop!"—does not that father love his son?—That tender mother who sees her infant on the point of eating some poisonous berry, and cries out sharply, "Stop, stop! put it down!"—does not that mother love that child?—It is indifference that lets people alone, and allows them to go on every one in his own way. It is love, tender love, that warns and raises the cry of alarm. The cry of "Fire!—fire!" at midnight may sometimes startle a man out of his sleep, rudely, harshly, unpleasantly. But who would complain if that cry was the means of saving his life? The words, "Except ye repent, ye shall all perish," may seem at first sight stern and severe. But they are words of love, and may be the means of delivering precious souls from hell.

Reader there are three things to which I ask your attention in speaking to you about this text of Scripture.

I. First of all, I will speak of the *nature of repentance—what is it?*

II. Secondly, I will speak of the *necessity of repentance,—why is repentance needful?*

III. Thirdly, I will speak of the *encouragements to repentance,—what is there to lead men to repent?*

I First of all, *what is repentance?*

I ask your attention to this point. The importance of the inquiry cannot be overrated. Repentance is one of the foundation-stones of Christianity. Sixty times, at least, we find repentance spoken of in the New Testament. What was the first doctrine our Lord Jesus Christ preached? We are told, that He said, "Repent ye, and believe the Gospel." (Mark i. 15.) What did the apostles proclaim when the Lord sent them forth the first time? They "preached that men should repent." (Mark vi. 12.) What was the charge which Jesus gave His disciples when He left the world? That "repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations." (Luke xxiv. 47.) What was the concluding appeal of the first sermons which Peter preached? "Repent, and be baptized." "Repent ye, and be converted." (Acts ii. 38: iii. 19.) What was the summary of doctrine which Paul gave to the Ephesian elders, when he parted from them? He told them that he had taught them publicly, and from house to house, "testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance

toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." (Acts xx. 21.) What was the description which Paul gave of his own ministry, when he made his defence before Festus and Agrippa? He told them that he had showed all men that they should "repent, and do works meet for repentance." (Acts xxvi. 20.) What was the account given by the believers at Jerusalem of the conversion of the Gentiles, when they heard of it? They said, "Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life." (Acts xi. 18.) What is one of the first qualifications which the Church of England requires of all persons that would come to the Lord's table? They are to "examine themselves whether they repent them truly of their former sins." No impenitent person, according to the Church of England, ought ever to come to the Lord's table. Reader, you will surely agree with me that these are serious considerations. They ought to show you the importance of the inquiry I am now making. A mistake about repentance is a most dangerous mistake. An error about repentance is an error that lies at the very roots of our religion. What, then, is repentance? When can it be said of any man, that he repents?

Repentance is a thorough change of man's natural heart upon the subject of sin. We are all born in sin. We naturally love sin. We take to sin, as soon as we can act and think, as the bird takes to flying, and the fish takes to swimming. There never was a child that required schooling or education in order to learn deceitfulness, sensuality, passion, self-will, gluttony, pride, and foolishness. These things are not

picked up from bad companions, or gradually learned by a long course of tedious instruction. They spring up of themselves, even when boys and girls are brought up alone. The seeds of them are evidently the natural product of the heart. The aptitude of all children to these things is an unanswerable proof of the corruption and fall of man. Now when this heart of ours is changed by the Holy Ghost, when this natural love of sin is cast out, then takes place that change which the word of God calls "repentance." The man in whom the change is wrought is said to "repent." He may be called, in one word, a "penitent" man.

But I dare not leave the subject here. It deserves a closer and more searching investigation. It is not safe to deal in general statements, when doctrines of this kind are handled. I will try to take repentance to pieces, and dissect and analyze it before your eyes. I will show you the parts and portions of which repentance is made up. I will endeavour to set before you something of the experience of every truly penitent man.

True repentance begins with *knowledge of sin*. The eyes of the penitent man are opened. He sees with dismay and confusion the length and breadth of God's holy law, and the extent, the enormous extent, of his own transgressions. He discovers, to his surprise, that in thinking himself a "good sort of man," and a man with a "good heart," he has been under a huge delusion. He finds out that, in reality, he is wicked, and guilty, and corrupt, and bad in God's sight. His pride breaks down. His high thoughts melt away.

He sees that he is neither more nor less than a great sinner. This is the first step in true repentance.

True repentance goes on to work *sorrow for sin*. The heart of a penitent man is touched with deep remorse, because of his past transgressions. He is cut to the heart to think that he should have lived so madly, and so wickedly. He mourns over time wasted, over talents misspent, over God dishonoured, over his own soul injured. The remembrance of these things is grievous to him. The burden of these things is sometimes almost intolerable. When a man so sorrows, you have the second step in true repentance.

True repentance proceeds, further, to produce in a man *confession of sin*. The tongue of a penitent man is loosed. He feels he must speak to that God against whom he has sinned. Something within him tells him he must cry to God, and pray to God, and talk with God, about the state of his own soul. He must pour out his heart, and acknowledge his iniquities, at the throne of grace. They are a heavy burden within him, and he can no longer keep silence. He can keep nothing back. He will not hide anything. He goes before God, pleading nothing for himself, and willing to say, "I have sinned against heaven and before thee;—my iniquity is great;—God be merciful to me a sinner!" When a man goes thus to God in confession, you have the third step in true repentance.

True repentance, furthermore, shows itself before the world in a thorough *breaking off from sin*. The life of a penitent man is altered. The course of his daily conduct is entirely changed. A new King reigns within

his heart. He puts off the old man. What God commands, he now desires to practice; and what God forbids, he now desires to avoid. He strives in all ways to keep clear of sin, to fight with sin, to war with sin, to get the victory over sin. He ceases to do evil. He learns to do well. He breaks off sharp from bad ways, and bad companions. He labours, however feebly, to live a new life. When a man does this, you have the fourth step in true repentance.

True repentance, in the last place, shows itself by producing in the heart a settled habit of *deep hatred of all sin*. The mind of a penitent man becomes a mind habitually holy. He abhors that which is evil, and cleaves to that which is good. He delights in the law of God. He comes short of his own desires not unfrequently. He finds in himself an evil principle warring against the Spirit of God. He finds himself cold when he would be hot, backward when he would be forward, heavy when he would be lively, in God's service. He is deeply conscious of his own infirmities. He groans under a sense of indwelling corruption. But still, for all that, the general bias of his heart is towards God, and away from evil. He can say with David, "I count all thy precepts concerning all things to be right, and I hate every false way." (Psa. cxix. 128.) When a man can say this, you have the fifth, or crowning step, of true repentance.

But now, is the picture of repentance complete? Can I leave the subject here, and go on? I cannot do it. There remains yet one thing behind that ought never to be forgotten. Were I not to mention this one thing,

I might make hearts sad that God would not have made sad, and raise seeming barriers between men's souls and heaven.

True repentance, such as I have just described, is never alone in the heart of any man. It always has a companion—a blessed companion. It is always accompanied by lively faith in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Wherever faith is, there is repentance; wherever repentance is, there is always faith. I do not decide which comes first,—whether repentance comes before faith, or faith before repentance. But I am bold to say, that the two graces are never found separate, one from the other. Just as you cannot have the sun without light, or ice without cold, or fire without heat, or water without moisture,—so long you will never find true faith without true repentance, and you will never find true repentance without lively faith. The two things will always go side by side.

And now, reader, before I go any further, search and try your own heart, and see what you know about true repentance. I do not tell you that the experience of all penitent people tallies exactly, precisely, and minutely. I do not say that any man ever knows sin, or mourns for sin, or confesses sin, or forsakes sin, or hates sin, perfectly, thoroughly, completely, and as he ought. But this I do say, that all true Christians will recognise something which they know and have felt, in the things which I have just been saying. Repentance, such as I have described, will be, in the main, the experience of every true believer. Search, then, and see what you know of it in your own soul.

Beware that you make no mistake about the nature of true repentance. The devil knows too well the value of that precious grace not to dress up spurious imitations of it. Wherever there is good coin there will always be bad money. Wherever there is a valuable grace, the devil will put in circulation counterfeits and shams of that grace, and try to palm them off on men's souls. Make sure that you are not deceived.

Take heed that your repentance be a business of your heart. It is not a grave face, or a sanctimonious countenance, or a round of self-imposed austerities,—it is not this alone that makes true repentance towards God. The real grace is something far deeper than a mere affair of face, and clothes, and days, and forms. Ahab could put on sackcloth when it served his turn. But Ahab never repented.

Take heed that your repentance be a repentance wherein you turn to God. Roman Catholics can run to priests and confessionals when they are frightened. Felix could tremble when he heard the Apostle Paul preach. But all this is not true repentance. See that your repentance leads you unto God, and make you flee to Him as your best Friend.

Take heed that your repentance be a repentance attended by a thorough forsaking of sin. Sentimental people can cry when they hear moving sermons on Sundays, and yet return to the ball, the theatre, and the opera in the week after. Herod liked to hear John the Baptist preach, and “heard him gladly,” and “did many things.” But feelings in religion are worse than worthless, unless they are accompanied by practice.

Mere sentimental excitement, without thorough breaking off from sin, is not the repentance which God approves.

Take heed, above all things, that your repentance be closely bound up with faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. See that your convictions be convictions that never rest except at the foot of the cross whereon Jesus Christ died. Judas Iscariot could say, "I have sinned," but Judas never turned to Jesus. Judas never looked by faith to Jesus, and therefore Judas died in his sins. Give me that conviction of sin which makes a man flee to Christ, and mourn, because, by his sins, he has pierced the Lord who bought him. Give me that contrition of soul under which a man feels much about Christ, and grieves to think of the despite he has done to so gracious a Saviour. Going to Sinai, hearing about the ten commandments, looking at hell, thinking about the terrors of damnation—all this may make people afraid, and has its use. But no repentance ever lasts, in which a man does not look at Calvary more than at Sinai, and see in a bleeding Jesus the strongest motive for contrition. Such repentance comes down from heaven. Such repentance is planted in man's heart by God the Holy Ghost. Reader, see that such repentance be yours.

II. I pass on now to the second point on which I purpose to speak. I will consider the necessity of repentance. *Why is repentance needful?*

The text which stands at the head of this subject, shows clearly the necessity of repentance.—The words

of our Lord Jesus Christ are distinct, express, and emphatic, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." All, all, without exception, need repentance toward God. It is not only necessary for thieves, murderers, drunkards, adulterers, fornicators, and the inmates of prisons and of jails. No! all born of the seed of Adam, all, without exception, need repentance toward God. The queen upon her throne and the pauper in the workhouse, the rich man in his drawing room, the servant maid in the kitchen, the professor of sciences at the university, the poor ignorant boy that follows the plough—all by nature need repentance. All are born in sin, and all must repent and be converted, if they would be saved. All must have their hearts changed about sin. All must repent, as well as believe the Gospel. "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter the kingdom of heaven." "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

But whence comes the necessity of repentance? Why is such tremendously strong language used about this necessity? What are the reasons, what the causes, why repentance is so needful? Reader, give me your attention again. Suffer me to show you, in a few words, the necessity of repentance.

For one thing, without repentance there is *no forgiveness of sins*. In saying this, I must guard myself against misconstruction. I ask you emphatically not to misunderstand me. The tears of repentance wash away no sins. It is bad divinity to say that they do. That is the office,—that the work of the blood of Christ alone.—Contrition makes no atonement for transgression. It

is wretched theology to say that it does. It can do nothing of the kind. Our best repentance is a poor, imperfect thing, and needs repenting over again. Our best contrition has defects enough about it to sink us into hell.—“We are counted righteous before God only for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ, by faith, and not for our own works or deservings,—not for our repentance, holiness, almsgiving, sacrament-receiving, or anything of the kind.—All this is perfectly true. But still it is no less true that justified people are always penitent people, and that a forgiven sinner will always be a man who mourns over, and loathes his sins. God in Christ is willing to receive rebellious man, and grant him peace, if he only comes to Him in Christ’s name, however wicked he may have been. But God requires—and requires justly—that the rebel shall throw down his arms. The Lord Jesus Christ is ready to pity, pardon, relieve, cleanse, wash, sanctify, and fit for heaven. But the Lord Jesus Christ desires to see a man hate the sins that he wishes to be forgiven. Let some men call this “legality” if they will.—Let some call it “bondage” if they please. I take my stand on Scripture. The testimony of God’s Word is plain and unmistakable. Justified people are always penitent people. Without repentance there is no forgiveness of sins.

For another thing, without repentance there is *no happiness in the life that now is*. There may be high spirits, excitement, laughter, and merriment, so long as health is good, and money is in the pocket. But these things are not solid happiness. There is a conscience in all men, and that conscience must be satisfied. So

long as conscience feels that sin has not been repented and forsaken, so long it will not be quiet, and will not let a man feel comfortable within. We all of us have an inner man, unknown to the world,—an inner man, with whom our companions and friends have often no acquaintance. That inner man has a burden upon him, so long as sin is not repented; and until that burden is taken off, that inner man has no real comfort. Can you and I be comfortable, when we are not in a right position? It is impossible. And what is a man's true position? He is never in his right position till he has turned his back upon sin and turned his face towards God.—A man's house is never comfortable till all things are in order. And when is the house of the inward man in order? Never, till God is King, and the world put down in the second place,—never, till God is upon the throne, and sin cast down and put out of doors. You might as well expect the solar system to go on well without the sun, as expect that heart of yours to be comfortable when God is not in His place. The great account with God must be settled. The King must be upon His throne. Then, and not till then, there will be peace within. Without repentance there can be no true happiness. We must repent if we want to be happy.

For another thing, without repentance there can be *no meetness for heaven in the world that is yet to come*. Heaven is a prepared place, and they who go to heaven must be a prepared people. Our hearts must be in tune for the employments of heaven, or else heaven itself would be a miserable abode. Our minds must be in

harmony with those of the inhabitants of heaven, or else the society of heaven, would soon be intolerable to us. Gladly would I help every one to heaven into whose hands this book may fall. But I never would have you ignorant that if you went there with an impenitent heart, heaven would be no heaven to your soul. What could you possibly do in heaven, if you got there with a heart loving sin? To which of all the saints would you speak? By whose side would you sit down? Surely the angels of God would make no sweet music to the heart of him who cannot bear saints upon earth, and never praised the Lamb for redeeming love! Surely the company of patriarchs, and apostles, and prophets, would be no joy to that man who will not read his Bible now, and does not care to know what apostles and prophets wrote. Oh! no! no! there can be no happiness in heaven, if we get there with an impenitent heart. The fish is not happy when it is out of water. The bird is not happy when it is confined in a cage. And why? They are all out of their proper element and natural position. And man, unconverted man, impenitent man, would not be happy if he got to heaven without a heart changed by the Holy Ghost. He would be a creature out of his proper element. He would have no faculties to enable him to enjoy his holy abode. Without a penitent heart there is no "meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light." We must repent, if we want to go to heaven.

Reader, I beseech you by the mercies of God, to lay to heart the things which I have just been saying, and to ponder them well. You live in a world of cheating,

imposition, and deception. Let no man deceive you about the necessity of repentance. Oh, that professing Christians would see, and know, and feel, more than they do, the necessity, the absolute necessity, of true repentance towards God! There are many things that are not needful. Riches are not needful. Health is not needful. Fine clothes are not needful. Noble friends are not needful. The favour of the world is not needful. Gifts and learning are not needful. Millions have reached heaven without these things. Thousands are reaching heaven every year without them. But no one ever reached heaven without "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."

Reader, let no man ever persuade you that any religion deserves to be called the Gospel, in which repentance toward God has not a most prominent place. A Gospel, indeed! That is no Gospel in which repentance is not a principal thing. A Gospel! It is the Gospel of man, but not of God. A Gospel! It comes from earth, but not from heaven. A Gospel! It is not the Gospel at all; it is rank antinomianism, and nothing else. So long as you hug your sins, and cleave to your sins, and will have your sins, so long you may talk as you please about the Gospel, but your sins are not forgiven. You may call that legal, if you like. You may say, if you please, you "hope it will be all right at last;—God is merciful;—God is love;—Christ has died;—I hope I shall go to heaven after all." No! I tell you, it is not all right. It will never be all right, at that rate. You are trampling under foot the blood of atonement. You have as yet no part or lot in Christ.

So long as you do not repent of sin, the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is no Gospel to your soul. Christ is a Saviour *from* sin, not a Saviour for man *in* sin. If a man will have his sins, the day will come when that merciful Saviour will say to him, "Depart from me, thou worker of iniquity! depart into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

Reader, let no man ever delude you into supposing that you can be happy in this world without repentance. Oh! No! You may laugh and dance, and go upon Sundays in excursion trains, and crack good jokes, and sing good songs, and say, "Cheer boys cheer!" and "There's a good time coming;"—but all this is no proof that you are happy. So long as you do not quarrel with sin, you will never be a truly happy man. Thousands go on for a time in this way, and seem merry before the eyes of men, and yet in their heart carry about a lurking sorrow. When they are alone they are wretched. When they are not in jovial company they are low. Conscience makes cowards of them. They do not like being by themselves. They hate quiet thinking. They must have constantly some new excitement. Every year they must have more. Just as an opium-eater needs a larger dose every year he goes on eating opium, so does the man that seeks happiness in anything except in God need greater excitement every year that he lives, and after all is never happy.

Yes! reader, and worse than all, the longer you go on without repentance, the more unhappy will that heart of yours be. When old age creeps over you and grey hairs appear upon your head,—when you are un-

able to go where you once went, and take pleasure where you once took pleasure,—your wretchedness and misery will break in upon you like an armed man. The more impenitent a man is, the more miserable he becomes. Have you ever heard of the great clock of St. Paul's in London? At midday, in the roar of business, when carriages, and carts, and waggons, and omnibuses, go rolling through the streets, how many never hear that great clock strike, unless they live very near it. But when the work of the day is over, and the roar of business has passed away,—when men are gone to sleep, and silence reigns in London,—then at twelve, at one, at two, at three, at four, the sound of that clock may be heard for miles around.—Twelve!—One!—Two!—Three!—Four!—How that clock is heard by many a sleepless man! That clock is just like the conscience of the impenitent man. While he has health and strength, and goes on in the whirl of business, he will not hear conscience. He drowns and silences its voice by plunging into the world. He will not allow the inner man to speak to him. But the day will come when conscience will be heard, whether he likes it or not. The day will come when its voice will sound in his ears, and pierce him like a sword. The time will come when he must retire from the world, and lie down on the sick bed, and look death in the face. And then the clock of conscience, that solemn clock, will sound in his heart, and if he has not repented, will bring wretchedness and misery to his soul. Oh! no! write it down in the tablets of your heart,—without repentance no peace!

Above all, let no man make you dream, that there is

a possibility of reaching heaven without repentance toward God. We all want to go to heaven. A man would be justly set down as a madman, if he said that he wanted to go to hell. But never let it be forgotten, that none go to heaven except those whom the Holy Ghost has prepared for it. I make my solemn protest against those modern delusions, that all men shall go to heaven at last,—that it matters not how you live,—that whether you are holy or unholy, it does not signify,—that whether you are godless or God-fearing, it is all the same,—that all at length will get to heaven. I cannot find such teaching in the Bible. I find the Bible contradicting it flatly. However speciously this new idea may be propounded, and however plausibly it may be defended, it cannot stand the test of the Word of God. No! reader, let God be true, and every man a liar. Heaven is no such place as some seem to fancy. The inhabitants of heaven are no such mixed multitude as many try to believe. They are all of one heart, and one mind. Heaven is a place to which God's people shall go. But for those who are impenitent and unbelieving, and will not come to Christ, for such the Bible says, plainly and unmistakeably, there remains nothing but hell.

Oh, reader, it is a solemn thought that an impenitent man is unfit for heaven. He could not be happy in heaven, if he got there. I remember hearing of a clergyman, who many years ago was travelling by coach. He sat by the coachman's side upon the box. The coachman was one of those unhappy men who fancy nothing is to be done without swearing. He was cursing,

swearing, blaspheming, taking God's name in vain, for many a long mile together. On he drove, now flying into a passion, now beating his horses, now cursing and swearing again. Such were the coachman's ways. At last the clergyman said to him, quietly, "Coachman, I am exceedingly afraid about you." "Sir," said the coachman, "what should you be afraid of? All is going on right, we are not likely to be upset." "Coachman," said the clergyman again, "I am exceedingly afraid about you; because I cannot think what you would do in heaven, if you got there; there will be no cursing in heaven; there will be no swearing in heaven; there will be no passion in heaven; there will be no horses to beat in heaven." "Coachman," said the minister once more, "I cannot think what you would do in heaven;"—"Oh!" said the coachman, "that is your opinion;"—and no more was said.—Years passed away. A day came when a person told the clergyman a sick man desired to see him. He was a stranger. He had come into the parish, he said, because he wanted to die there. The clergyman went to see him. He entered a room and found a dying man, whose face he did not know. "Sir," said the dying man, "you do not remember me." "No," said the clergyman, "I do not." "Sir," said the man, "I remember you. I am that coachman, to whom, many years ago, you said, 'Coachman, I am afraid about you, because I do not know what you would do if you got to heaven.' Sir, those words laid hold upon me. I saw I was not fit to die. Those words worked, and worked, and worked in my heart, and I never rested till I had

repented of sin, and fled to Christ, and found peace in Him, and became a new man." "And now," said he, "by the grace of God I trust I am prepared to meet my Maker, and am meet for the inheritance of the saints in light."

Reader, once more I charge you to remember, — without repentance toward God, there can be no meetness for heaven. It would give pain to an impenitent man to place him there. It would be no mercy to him. —He would not be happy. He could not be happy. There could be no enjoyment in heaven to a man who got there, without a heart hating sin, and a heart loving God. I expect to see many wonders at the last day. I expect to see some at the right hand of the Lord Jesus Christ, whom I once feared I should see upon the left. I expect to see some at the left hand whom I supposed to be good Christians, and expected to see at the right. But there is one thing I am sure I shall not see.—I shall not see at the right hand of Jesus Christ one single impenitent man. I shall see Abraham there, who said, "I am dust and ashes."—I shall see Jacob there, who said, "I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies."—I shall see Job there, who said, "I am vile."—I shall see David there, who said, "I was shapen in iniquity : in sin did my mother conceive me."—I shall see Isaiah there, who said, "I am a man of unclean lips."—I shall see Paul there, who said, "I am the chief of sinners."—I shall see the martyr, John Bradford there, who often signed himself at the end of his letters, "That wretched sinnner, that miserable sinner, John Bradford,"—that same John Bradford who

said, whenever he saw a man going to be hanged, "There goes John Bradford, but for the grace of God."—I shall see Archbishop Usher there, whose last words were, "Pardon my many sins, especially my sins of omission."—I shall see Grimshaw there, whose last words were, "Here goes an unprofitable servant."—But they will all be of one heart, one mind, one experience. They will all have hated sin. They will all have mourned for sin. They will all have confessed sin. They will all have forsaken sin. They will all have repented as well as believed,—repented toward God as well as believed in Jesus Christ. They will all say with one voice, "What hath God wrought!" They will all say, "By the grace of God I am where I am," as well as "By the grace of God I am what I am."

III. I come now to the third and last thing of which I promised to speak. I will speak of *the encouragement there is to repentance*. What is there to lead a man to repent?

I feel it very important to say something on this point. I know that many difficulties arise in the way when the subject of repentance is brought before us. I know how slow man is to give up sin. You might as well tell him to cut off a right hand, or pluck out a right eye, or cut off a right foot, as tell him to part with his darling sins.—I know the strength of old habits and early ways of thinking about religion. At first they are like cobwebs. At last they are iron chains.—I know the power of pride, and that "fear of man that bringeth a snare."—I know the dislike there is in

people to being thought a saint, and supposed to care about religion—I know that hundreds and thousands would never shrink from storming a Redan, a Malakoff, and yet cannot bear to be laughed at and thought ridiculous because they care for their souls.—And I know, too, the malice of our great enemy, the devil. Will he part with his “lawful captives” without a conflict? Never. Will he give up his prey without a fight? Never. I once saw a lion at the Zoological Gardens being fed. I saw his meal cast down before him. I saw the keeper try to take that meal away.—I remember the lion’s roar, his spring, his struggle to retain his food. And I remember the “roaring lion that goeth about seeking whom he may devour.” Will he give up a man, and let him repent without a struggle? Never, never, never! Man wants many encouragements to make him repent.

But there are encouragements, great, broad, wide, full, and free. There are things in the word of God which ought to nerve every heart and arouse every one to repent without delay. Reader, I desire to bring these things before you. I would not have one soul lay down this book and say, “The thing cannot be done; it is impossible.” I should like all to say, “There is hope! There is hope! There is an open door! It is possible! The thing can be done! By the grace of God a man may repent.”

Hear, for one thing, *what a gracious Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ is*. I place Him first and foremost as the great argument to encourage a man to repentance. I say to every doubting soul,—“Look at Christ, think

of Christ." He is one "able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him. He is one anointed "a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance as well as remission of sins." He is one that "came to seek and to save that which was lost." He is one who said, "I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." He is one who cries, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." He is one who has pledged His royal word, "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." And He it is of whom it is written, "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." I answer all doubts, and questions, and difficulties, and objections, and fears with this simple argument. I say to every one that wants encouragement, "Look at Christ, think of Christ. Consider Jesus Christ the Lord; and then doubt about repentance no more."

Hear, for another thing, *what glorious promises the word of God contains*. It is written, "Whosoever confesseth and forsaketh his sins shall find mercy." It is written again, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." It is written again, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for their's is the kingdom of God. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." Surely these promises are encouragements. Again, I say, *doubt about repentance no more*.

Hear, for another thing, *what gracious declarations*

the word of God contains. "When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive." "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." "God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." "As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth; turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?" "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." Surely these words are encouraging, if any words can be! Again I say, *doubt about repentance no more.*

Hear, for another thing, *what marvellous parables our Lord Jesus spoke upon this subject.* "Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself: God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast,"—as if his heart was so full of sorrow that he could not show it sufficiently—"he smote upon his breast," saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.—"I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other." Hear, again, that other marvellous parable,—the parable of the prodigal son. "A certain man had two sons: and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them

his living. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country: and he sent him into his fields to feed swine." And there, feeding swine, in his lowly case, he "came to himself, and said, 'How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise, and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.' And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off,"—mark that,—“a great way off,”—“his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat and be merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry." Surely these are mighty encouragements to repentance. Again I say, *doubt about repentance no more.*

Hear, lastly, *what wonderful examples there are in the word of God; of God's mercy and kindness to penitent*

men. Read the story of David. What sin can be greater than David's sin? But when David turned to the Lord, and said, "I have sinned against the Lord," the answer came, "The Lord hath put away thy sin."—Read the story of Manasseh. What wickedness could have been greater than his? He killed his own children. He turned his back upon his father's God. He placed idols in the temple. And yet when Manasseh was in prison and humbled himself, and prayed to the Lord, the Lord heard his prayer, and brought him out of captivity.—Read the history of Peter. What apostacy could be greater than his? He denied his Master three times over with an oath! And yet, when Peter wept, and mourned for his sin, there was mercy even for Peter, and penitent Peter was restored to his Master's favour.—Read the story of the penitent thief. What case could be more desperate than his? He was a dying man on the brink of hell. Yet when he said to Jesus, "Lord remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom," at once the marvellous answer came, "Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou," even thou, "be with me in paradise."

Oh, reader! what greater encouragement to repentance can be imagined or conceived? Why are all these cases recorded for our learning? They are intended to lead men to repentance. They are all patterns of God's long-suffering—patterns of God's mercy—patterns of God's willingness to receive penitent sinners. They are proofs of what God's grace can do. They are a cloud of witnesses, proving that it is worth while for man to repent—that there is encouragement for man to turn to God,

and that such an one as goeth on still in his sins is utterly without excuse.

I remember hearing of a mother whose daughter ran away from her, and lived a life of sin. For a long time no one could tell where she was.—Yet that daughter came back and was reclaimed. She became a true penitent. She was taught to mourn for sin. She turned to Christ and believed in Him. Old things passed away, and all things became new. Her mother was asked one day to tell what she had done to bring her daughter back.—What means had she used?—What steps had she taken? Her reply was a very striking one. She said, “I prayed for her night and day.” But that was not all. She went on to say, “I never went to bed at night without leaving my front door unlocked, and the door on the latch. I thought if my daughter came back some night when I was in bed, she should never be able to say that she found the door shut. She should never be able to say that she came to her mother’s home, but could not get in.” And so it turned out. Her daughter came back one night, and tried the door, and found the door open, and at once came in, to go out and sin no more. That open door was the saving of her soul.—Reader, that open door is a beautiful illustration of the heart of God towards sinners! The door of mercy is set open. The door is not yet locked. The door is always upon the latch. God’s heart is full of love. God’s heart is full of compassion. Whosoever a man may have been, and whatsoever a man may have been, at midnight, at any time, whenever he returns to God, he will find God willing to receive him,

ready to pardon him, and glad to have him at home. All things are ready. Whosoever will may come in.

And, reader, out of all the millions who have turned to God and repented, who ever repented of repentance? I answer boldly, not one. Thousands every year repent of folly and unbelief. Thousands mourn over time misspent. Thousands regret their drunkenness, and gambling, and fornication, and adultery, and oaths, and neglected opportunities. But no one has ever risen up and declared to the world that he repents of repenting and turning towards God. The steps in the narrow way of life are all in one direction. You will never see in the narrow way the step of one who turned back because the narrow way was not good.

I remember reading of a remarkable event that occurred in a place of worship where a Puritan minister, Mr. Doolittle, was preaching, two hundred years ago. Just as he was about to begin his sermon, he saw a young man, a stranger, coming into his church. He guessed by the young man's manner that he was anxious about his soul, and yet undecided about religion. He took a remarkable course with him. He tried a curious experiment, but God blessed it to the young man's soul. Before Mr. Doolittle gave out his text, he turned to an old Christian whom he saw on one side of his church. He addressed him by name, and said to him, "Brother, do you repent of having served God?" The old Christian stood up manfully before the congregation, and said "Sir, I have served the Lord from my youth, and He has never done me anything but good."—He turned to the left hand, where he saw another Christian, and

addressed him in the same way. "Brother," said he, calling him by his name, "Do you repent of having served Christ?" That man also stood up manfully before the congregation, and said, "Sir, I never was truly happy till I took up the cross, and served the Lord Jesus Christ." Then Mr. Doolittle turned to the young man, and said, "Young man, will you repent? Young man, will you take up the cross? Young man, will you this day begin to serve Christ?" God sent power with these words. The young man stood up before the congregation, and said in a humble tone, "Yes sir, I will." That very day was the beginning of eternal life in the young man's soul. Reader, depend upon it, the two answers which Mr. Doolittle got that day are the experience of all true Christians. Depend upon it no man ever repents of repentance. No man was ever sorry that he served the Lord. No man ever said at the end of his days, "I have read my Bible too much, I have thought of God too much, I have prayed too much, I have been too careful about my soul." Oh! no. The people of God would always say, "Had I my life over again, I would walk far more closely with God than ever I have done. I am sorry that I have not served God better, but I am not sorry that I have served Him. The way of Christ may have its cross. But it is a way of pleasantness, and a path of peace." Surely that fact alone speaks volumes. It is a fact that clinches every argument which I have already advanced. Surely it is worth while for a man to repent. These are encouragements. The impenitent man is without excuse.

And now, reader, I have brought before you, the three

points which I proposed at the outset of this tract to consider. I have shewn you the nature of repentance toward God—the necessity of repentance—and the encouragements to repentance. It only remains to conclude the subject by a few words of practical affectionate application to the souls of all who read it.

1. My first word shall be *a word of warning*. I offer an affectionate warning to every impenitent soul into whose hands this tract may fall. I cannot doubt for a moment that many a reader of this tract is not saved. I cannot for a moment suppose that all who read its pages are truly repentant toward God, and lively believers in Jesus Christ. I dare not think it.—I cannot think it. And my first word shall be a word of warning,—tender, affectionate warning,—to all impenitent and unconverted people who may happen to read, “Repent or Perish.”

What stronger warning can I give you than that which my text contains? What words can I use more solemn and more heart-searching than the words of my Lord and Master—“Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish?” Yes! you who are reading, and as you read know you are not yet at peace with God,—you who are halting, lingering, undecided, in religion,—you are the man to whom the words of the text should come with power, “Except thou repentest, thou,” even thou, “shalt perish.”

Oh reader, think what awful words are these! Who can measure out the full amount of what they contain? “Shall perish!” Perish in body,—perish in soul,—

perish miserably at last in hell! I dare not attempt to paint the horrors of that thought. The worm that never dies, the fire that is not quenched, the blackness of darkness for ever, the hopeless prison, the bottomless pit, the lake that burns with fire and brimstone,—all, all are but feeble emblems of the reality of hell. And to this hell all impenitent people are daily travelling! Yes! from churches and chapels,—from rich men's drawing rooms and poor men's cottages—from the midst of knowledge, wealth, and respectability, all who will not repent are certainly travelling toward hell. "Except ye repent, ye shall all perish."

Think how great is *your danger*, my dear reader! Where are your sins, your many sins? You know you are a sinner. You must be aware of it. It is vain to pretend you have committed no sins. And where are your sins, if you have never yet repented, never mourned for sin, never confessed sin, never fled to Christ, and never found pardon through Christ's blood? Oh, take heed to yourself.—The pit opens her mouth for you. The devil is saying, of you, "He will be mine." Take heed to yourself: remember the words of the text, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." They are not my words, but Christ's words. It is not my saying, but Christ's saying. Christ says—Christ the merciful, Christ the gracious,—“Except thou repentest, thou wilt certainly perish.”

Think again of *your guilt*.—Yes, I say, deliberately, think of your guilt. It is guilt when a man does not repent. We are responsible and accountable to God for repentance. It is vain to say we are not. What does

St. Paul say to the Athenians, "God commandeth all men everywhere to repent."—(Acts xvii. 30.) What does our Lord say of Chorazin and Bethsaida? Why were they so guilty? Why was their position in hell to be so intolerable? Because they would not repent and believe.—It is the express testimony of the Son of God, that the impenitent man who has been called to repentance is more guilty than if he had never been urged to repent.

Think again of *the folly* of remaining an impenitent man! Yes, I say the folly. The world you cleave to is melting beneath your feet already. What will bank-notes do for you in the life to come? What will your gold be worth to you a hundred years hence? When your last hour comes, what can all the gold in the globe do for you, if you die an impenitent man? You live for the world, perhaps, now. You drive hard and furiously to be successful in business. You compass sea and land to add acre to acre, or accumulate stock in the funds. You do all you can to get money, to amass riches, to make yourself comfortable, to have pleasure, to leave something for wife and children when you die. But oh! remember, remember, if you have not got the grace of God and true repentance, you are a poor man, a pauper in the sight of God.

I shall never forget the effect produced upon my own mind when I read some years ago of that fearful shipwreck, the loss of the Central America,—a great steamer which was lost on the voyage from Havannah to New York. The steamer was bringing home from California three or four hundred gold-diggers. They had all got

their gold, and were coming home, proposing to spend their latter days in ease in their own country. But man proposes and God disposes.

About four-and-twenty hours after the Central America left Havannah, a mighty storm arose. Three or four heavy seas in succession struck the ship, and seriously damaged her. The engines became disabled and useless, and she fell off into the trough of the sea. She sprung a leak, and in spite of every effort the ship began to fill, and after a while, when all on board had pumped and baled, and baled and pumped, until they were exhausted, it became plain that the Central America, with her three or four hundred passengers and all her crew, was like to go down into the deep, deep sea, and carry nearly all on board with her. The crew launched the only boats they had. They placed the women passengers in these boats with just a sufficient complement of sailors to manage them. All honour be to them for their kind feeling to the weak and defenceless at a time like that! The boats put off from the vessel; but there were left behind two or three hundred people, many of them gold-diggers, when the Central America went down. One who left the ship in one of the last boats that took the women, described what he saw in the cabin of the steamer, when all hope was gone, and the great ship was about to go down. Men took out their gold. One said, holding his leather bag, containing his long-toiled-for accumulations, "Here; take it who will; take it who will. It is no more use to me: the ship is going down. Take it who will." Others took out their gold dust, and scattered it broadcast over the

cabin. "There," they said, "take it; take it who will. We are all going down. There is no more chance for us. The gold will do us no good." Oh, what a comment that is on the truly valueless nature of riches, when a man draws near to God! "Riches profit not in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivereth from death." Think of your folly, my beloved reader. Think of your folly as well as your danger, your folly as well as your guilt, if you will cleave to your sins. Think of your folly if you will not hear the warning that I give you this day. In my Master's name, I say to you once more, "Except thou repentest," thou, even thou who art reading this book, "thou shalt likewise perish."

2. My second word of application shall be *an invitation to all who feel their sins and desire to repent, and yet know not what to do*. I give it broadly and fully to all who ask me, "What shall I do, this very day, if I am to take your advice?" I answer that question without any hesitation. I say to you, in my Master's name, Repent, repent, repent this very day. Repent without delay.

Reader, I feel no difficulty in saying this. I cannot agree with those who say that unconverted people should not be told to repent or pray. I find the Apostle Peter saying to Simon Magus, "Repent of this thy wickedness." I find him saying, "Pray God, if perhaps the thought of thy heart may be forgiven." I am content to follow in the Apostle's wake. I say the same to every reader who is anxious about his soul. I say Re-

pent, Repent, Repent, without delay. The time will soon come when you must be decided, if ever you mean to be. Why not this very day? Why not to-night? Sermon-hearing cannot go on for ever. Going to churches and chapels must have an end. Liking this man and liking that man, belonging to this church and belonging to that chapel, holding these views and holding those views, thinking this preacher sound and that preacher unsound, is not enough to save a soul. A man must act at last, as well as think, if he means to go to heaven. A man must break off from his sins, and flee to the Lord Jesus, if he does not intend to be damned. A man must come out from the world and take up the cross. A man must be decided, and repent, and believe. A man must show his colours, and be on the Lord Jesus Christ's side, if he means to be saved. And why not begin all this to-night? Oh! repent, repent, repent without delay.

Do you ask me again what you ought to do? Go, I tell you, and cry to the Lord Jesus Christ this very day. Go and pour out your heart before Him. Go and tell Him what you are, and tell Him what you desire. Tell Him you are sinner;—He will not be ashamed of you. Tell Him you want to be saved;—He will hear you. Tell Him you are a poor weak creature;—He will listen to you. Tell Him you do not know what to do or how to repent;—He will give you His grace. He will pour out His Spirit upon you. He will hear you. He will grant your prayer. He will save your soul. There is enough in Christ, and to spare, for all the wants of all the world, for all the wants of every heart that is

unconverted, unsanctified, unbelieving, impenitent, and unrenewed. "What is your hope?" said a man to a poor Welsh boy, who could not speak much English, and was found dying in an inn one day.—"What is your hope about your soul?" What was his reply? He turned to the questioner, and said to him, in broken English, "Jesus Christ is plenty for everybody! Jesus Christ is plenty for everybody!" There was a mine of truth in those words. And well said another,—a navigator who died in the Lord at Beckenham: "Tell them all,—tell every man you meet,—Christ is for every man! JESUS CHRIST IS FOR EVERY MAN!" Go to that Saviour this day, and tell Him the wants of your soul. Go to Him, in the words of that beautiful hymn that says,—

"Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bid'st me come to Thee—
O Lamb of God, I come!

Just as I am, and waiting not,
To rid my soul of one dark blot,
To Thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O Lamb of God, I come!"

Go to the Lord Jesus in that spirit, and He will receive you. He will not refuse you. He will not despise you. He will grant you pardon, peace, everlasting life, and give you the grace of the Holy Ghost.

Do you ask me whether there is anything else you ought to do? Yes! I reply. Go and resolve to break off from every known sin. Let those who will, call such

advice legal. I trust I may never shrink from giving it. It can never be right to sit still in wickedness. It can never be wrong to say with Isaiah, "Cease to do evil." Whatever be your sin, resolve, by God's help, that to-morrow morning you will rise an altered man, and break off from that sin.—Whether it be drinking, or swearing, or Sabbath-breaking, or passion, or lying, or cheating, or covetousness,—whatever your sin and fault, determine, by God's grace, that you will break off sharp from it. Give it up without delay, and turn from it, by God's help, for the rest of your days. Cast it from you:—it is a serpent that will bite you to death. Throw it from you:—it is useless lumber;—it will sink the ship down to perdition. Cast away your besetting sin—give it up—turn from it—break it off. By God's help resolve that in that respect you will sin no more.

Reader, I think it just possible that you may be *ashamed* of repentance. I do beseech you to cast away such shame for ever. Never be ashamed of repentance toward God. Of sin you might be ashamed.—Of lying, swearing, drunkenness, gambling, Sabbath-breaking—of these a man ought to be ashamed. But of repentance, of prayer, of faith in Christ, of seeking God, of caring for the soul—never, never, so long as you live, never be ashamed of such things as these. I remember fifteen or sixteen years ago, a thing that came under my own knowledge, which gave me some idea of what shame can do. I was attending a dying man, who had been a sergeant in the 7th Dragoon Guards. He had ruined his health by drinking spirits. He had been a careless, thoughtless man about his soul. He told me upon his

death-bed that when he first began to pray, he was so ashamed of his wife knowing it, that when he went upstairs to pray, he would take his shoes off, and creep up in his stockings, that his wife might not be aware how he was spending his time. Verily, I am afraid there are many like him! Do not you be one of them. Whatever you are ashamed of, never be ashamed of seeking God.

Reader, I think it just possible that you are *afraid* to repent. You think you are so bad and unworthy that Christ will not have you. I do beseech you once more, to cast away such fear for ever. Never, never be afraid to repent. The Lord Jesus Christ is very gracious. He will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax. Fear not to draw near to Him.—There is a confessional ready for you. You need none made by man. The throne of grace is the true confessional.—There is a confessor ready for you. You need no ordained man, no priest, no bishop, no minister, to stand between you and God. The Lord Jesus is the true High Priest. The Lord Jesus Christ is the real Confessor. None is so wise, and none so loving as He. None but He can give you absolution, and send you away with a light heart and in perfect peace—O, take the invitation I bring you. Fear nothing. Christ is not an “austere man.” He despiseth not any. Arise this day, and flee to Him. Go to Christ and repent this night without delay.

3. My last word of application shall be an *exhortation to all who have known what repentance is by experience*. I address it to all who have, by God’s grace, felt their

sins, sorrowed for their sins, confessed their sins, given up their sins, and found peace in the blood of Jesus Christ. What shall I say to you but this? Keep up your repentance—*keep up your repentance*. Let it be a habit of mind you watch over to the last day of your life. Let it be a fire you never allow to burn low or to become dull. Keep up your repentance, if you love life.

I do not want you to make a Christ of repentance, or to turn it into a bondage for your soul. I do not bid you to measure the degree of your justification by your repentance, or to suppose that your sins are not forgiven because your repentance is imperfect. Justification is one thing, and repentance is another. You must not confuse things that differ. It is only faith that justifies. It is only faith that lays hold of Christ. But for all that, keep a jealous watch over your repentance. Keep it up—keep it up, and let not the fire burn low. Whenever you find a slackness coming over your soul, —whenever you feel slow, and dull, and heavy, and cold, and careless about little sins, look to your own heart then, and take heed lest you fall. Say to your soul, “Oh, my soul, what art thou doing? Hast thou forgotten David’s fall? Hast thou forgotten Peter’s backsliding? Hast thou forgotten David’s subsequent misery? Hast thou forgotten Peter’s after tears? Awake, O my soul, awake once more. Heap on fuel, make the fire burn bright. Return again to thy God, let thy repentance once more be lively.—Let thy repentance be repented over again.” Alas! how few are the hours in a Christian’s best days when he does not make work for repentance.

Reader, keep up your repentance till the last day of your life. There will always be sins to deplore, and infirmities to confess. Take them daily to the Lord Jesus Christ, and obtain from Him daily supplies of mercy and grace. Make confession daily to the Great High Priest, and receive from Him daily absolution. Feed daily on the passover Lamb. But never forget that it was to be eaten with bitter herbs. "Sir," said a young man to Philip Henry, "how long should a man go on repenting? How long, Mr. Henry, do you mean to go on repenting yourself?" What did old Philip Henry reply? "Sir, I hope to carry my repentance to the very gates of heaven. Every day I find I am a sinner, and every day I need to repent. I mean to carry my repentance, by God's help, up to the very gates of heaven."

Reader, may this be our divinity, your divinity, my divinity; your theology, my theology! May repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ be Jachin and Boaz, — the two great pillars before the temple of our religion, the corner-stones in our system of Christianity! (2 Chron. iii. 17.) May the two never be disjoined! May we, while we repent, believe; and while we believe, repent! And may repentance and faith, faith and repentance, be ever uppermost, foremost, the chief and principal articles in the creed of our souls!

Do you Confess? *

1 JOHN i. 9.

“ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

READER,

The question which forms the title of this tract is at all times deeply important. Among the foundation-stones of saving religion, few deserve more serious attention than “confession of sins.”

But there are occasions when circumstances give a particular importance to particular doctrines in religion. The assaults of enemies sometimes make it needful to exhibit some special truth with special distinctness. The plausible assertion of some error sometimes requires to be met by more than ordinary carefulness in showing “the thing as it is” in the word. A doctrine may perhaps be in the rear-rank to-day, and to-morrow may be thrust forward by the force of events into the very front of the battle. This is the case at the present time with

* An Annual Address for the year 1859.

the subject of "confession." Many years have passed away since men thought and talked so much as they do now about "the confession of sins."

Reader, I desire in this tract to lay down a few plain scriptural principles about "confession of sin." I would fain guide you to some clear and decided conclusions on this important subject. Let us beware, in the din of controversy and discussion, that we do not lose sight of the mind of the Spirit, and injure our own souls.—There is a confession which is needful to salvation, and there is a confession which is not needful at all.—There is a confessional to which all men and women ought to go, and there is a confessional which ought to be denounced, avoided, and abhorred.—Let us endeavour to separate the wheat from the chaff, and the precious from the vile. We shall do well if we learn to hold decided and Scriptural opinions about the vexed question of confession.

There are two points to which I purpose to direct your attention, and two inquiries to which, by God's help, I will supply an answer.

I. In the first place, Who are they that ought to confess sin?

II. In the second place, To whom ought confession of sin to be made?

Once let a man have clear views on these two points, and he will never go far wrong on the subject of confession.

I. In the first place, *Who are they that ought to confess sins?*

I answer this question in one plain sentence. All men and women in the world! All are born in sin and children of wrath. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Before God all are guilty. There is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not. There is not a child of Adam that ought not to confess sin. (Ephes. ii. 3., Rom. iii. 23, 19. Eccles. vii. 20.)

There is no exception to this rule. It does not apply only to murderers, and felons, and the inmates of prisons. It applies to all ranks, and classes, and orders of mankind. The highest are not too high to need confession. The lowest are not too low to be reached by God's requirement. Kings in their palaces, and poor men in their cottages,—preachers and hearers,—teachers and scholars,—landlords and tenants,—masters and servants,—all, all are alike summoned in the Bible to confession. None are so moral and respectable that they need not confess that they have sinned. All are sinners in thought, word, and deed, and all are commanded to acknowledge their transgressions. Every knee ought to bow, and every tongue ought to confess to God. "Behold," saith the Lord, "I will plead with thee because thou sayest, I have not sinned." (Jer. ii. 35.) "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." (1 John i. 8.)

Without confession there is *no salvation*. The love of God towards sinners is infinite. The readiness of Christ to receive sinners is unbounded. The blood of Christ can cleanse away all sin. But we must "plead guilty" before God can declare us innocent. We must acknow-

ledge that we surrender at discretion before we can be pardoned and let go free. Sins that are known and not confessed, are sins that are not forgiven. They are yet upon us, and daily sinking us nearer to hell. "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper : but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall find mercy." (Prov. xxviii. 13.)

Without confession there is *no inward peace*. Conscience will never be at rest, so long as it feels the burden of unacknowledged transgression. It is a load of which man must get rid if he means to be really happy. It is a worm at the root of all comfort. It is a blight on joy and mirth. The heart of the little child is not easy, when he stands in his parent's presence, and knows that he has done something wrong. He is never easy till he has confessed.—The heart of the grown-up man is never really easy, until he has unburdened himself before God, and obtained pardon and absolution. "When I kept silence," says David, "my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me : my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said I will confess my transgression unto the Lord : and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." (Psalm xxxii. 3—5.)

Reader, there is no gainsaying these things. They stand out plainly on the face of Scripture, as if they were written with a sunbeam. They are so clear that he who runs may read. Confession of sin is absolutely necessary to salvation. It is a habit which is an essential part of repentance unto life. Without it there is no going

to heaven. Without it we have no part or lot in Christ. Without it we shall certainly go to hell. All this is undoubtedly true. And yet in the face of all this, it is a melancholy and appalling fact, that few people confess their sins!

Some people have *no thought* or feeling about their sins. The subject is one which hardly crosses their minds. They rise in the morning and go to bed at night. They eat, and drink, and sleep, and work, and get money, and spend money, as if they had no souls at all. They live on as if this world was the only thing worth thinking of. They leave religion to parsons and old men and women. Their consciences seem asleep, if not dead. Of course they never confess.

Some people are *too proud* to acknowledge themselves sinners. Like the Pharisee of old, they flatter themselves they are "not as other men." They do not get drunk like some, or swear like others, or live profligate lives like others. They are moral and respectable! They perform the duties of their station! They attend church regularly! They are kind to the poor! What more would you have? If they are not good people and going to heaven, who can be saved?—But as to habitual confession of sin, they do not see that they need it. It is all very well for wicked people, but not for them. Of course, when sin is not really felt, sin will never be confessed.

Some people are *too indolent* and slothful to take any step in religion so decided as confession. Their Christianity consists in meaning, and hoping, and intending, and resolving. They do not positively object to any-

thing that they hear upon spiritual subjects. They can even approve of the Gospel. They hope one day to repent, and believe, and be converted, and become thorough Christians, and go to heaven after death. But they never get beyond "hoping." They never come to the point of making a business of religion. Of course they never confess sin.

In one or other of these ways thousands of persons on every side are ruining their souls. In one point they are all agreed. They may sometimes call themselves "sinners" in a vague general way, but they have no real sense, or sight, or understanding of sin. Its guilt, and vileness, and wickedness, and consequences, are utterly hid from their eyes. And the result, in each case, is one and the same. They know nothing practically of confession of sins.

Reader, shall I tell you the clearest proof that man is a fallen and corrupt creature? It is not open vice or unblushing profligacy. It is not the crowded public house, or the murderer's cell in a jail. It is not avowed infidelity, or gross and foul idolatry. All these are proofs, and convincing proofs indeed, that man is fallen;—but there is to my mind a stronger proof still. That proof is the wide-spread spirit of slumber in which the most of men lie chained and bound about their souls. When I see that multitudes of sensible men, and intelligent men, and decent-living men, can travel quietly towards the grave, and feel no concern about their sins, I want no more convincing evidence that man is "born in sin," and that his heart is alienated from God.—There is no avoiding the conclusion. Man is naturally asleep,

and must be awakened. He is blind, and must be made to see. He is dead, and must be made alive. If this was not the case, there would be no need for our pressing the duty of confession. Scripture commands it. Reason assents to it. Conscience, in its best moments, approves of it. And yet, notwithstanding this, the vast majority of men have no practical acquaintance with confession of sin!—No disease of body is so desperate as mortification. No heart is in so bad a state as the heart that does not feel sin.

Reader, shall I tell you my first and foremost wish for your soul, if you are yet unconverted? I can wish you nothing better than thorough *self-knowledge*. I should like the veil to be taken from your heart. I should like you to see yourself as you really are in the sight of God. Ignorance of self and sin is the root of all mischief to the soul. There is hardly a religious error or a false doctrine that may not be traced up to it. For want of seeing sin, men do not value salvation. Once let a man get a sight of his own heart, and he will begin to cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

Reader, if you have learned to feel and acknowledge your sinfulness, you have great reason to thank God. It is a real symptom of health in the inward man. It is a mighty token for good. To know your spiritual disease is one step towards a cure. To feel bad and wicked and hell-deserving, is the first beginning of being really good. Once more I say, you have great reason to thank God.

What though you feel ashamed and confounded at the sight of your own transgressions! What though you

are humbled to the dust, and cry, "Lord, I am vile. Lord, I am the very chief of sinners!" I tell you it is better a thousand times to have these feelings and be miserable under them, than to have no feelings at all. I tell you that anything is better than a dead conscience, and a cold heart, and a prayerless tongue!

Reader, if you have learned to feel and confess sin, you may well thank God and take courage. Whence came those feelings that you find within? Who told you that you were a guilty sinner? What moved you to begin acknowledging your transgressions? How was it that you first found sin a burden, and longed to be set free from it?—These feelings do not come from man's natural heart. The devil does not teach such lessons. The schools of this world have no power to impart them. Reader, these feelings come down from above. They are the precious gift of God the Holy Ghost. It is His special office to convince of sin. Rejoice, I say again, and be exceeding glad. The man who has really learned to feel and confess his sins, has learned that which millions never learn, and for want of which millions die in their sins, and are lost to all eternity.

II. I now turn to the second branch of my subject.
To whom ought confession of sin to be made?

I enter on this branch of the subject with sorrowful feelings. I approach it as a sailor would approach some rock on which many gallant ships have made shipwreck. I cannot forget that I have arrived at a point on which millions of so-called Christians have erred greatly, and millions are erring at the present day. But I dare not

keep back anything that is Scriptural, for fear of giving offence. The errors of millions must not prevent a minister of the Gospel speaking the truth. If multitudes are hewing out broken cisterns that can hold no water, it becomes the more needful to point out the true fountain. If countless souls are turning aside from the right way, it becomes the more important to show clearly to whom confession ought to be made.

Sin, to speak generally, ought to be confessed to God. He it is whom we have chiefly offended. His are the laws which we have broken. To Him all men and women will one day give account. His displeasure is that which sinners have principally to fear. This is what David felt: "Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight." (Psalm li. 4.) This is what David practised: "I said I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord." (Psalm xxxii. 5.) This is what Joshua advised Achan to do: "My son, give glory to God, and make confession to Him." (Jos. vii. 19.) The Jews were right when they said, "Who can forgive sins but God only?" (Mark ii. 7.)

But must we leave the matter here? Can vile sinners like us ever dare to confess our sins to a holy God? Will not the thought of His infinite purity shut our mouths and make us afraid? Must not the remembrance of His holiness make us afraid? Is it not written of God, that He is "of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity?" (Hab. i. 13.) Is it not said, that He "hates all workers of iniquity?" (Psalm. v. 5.) Did He not say to Moses, "There shall no man see my face and live?" (Exodus xxxiii. 20.) Did not

Israel say of old, "Let not God speak with us, lest we die?" (Exod. xx. 19.) Did not Daniel say, "How can the servant of my Lord talk with this my Lord?" (Dan. x. 17.) Did not Job say, "When I consider I am afraid of Him?" (Job xxiii. 15.) Did not Isaiah say, "Woe is me, for I am undone:—for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts?" (Isai. vi. 5.) Does not Elihu say, "Shall it be told Him that I speak? If a man speak, surely he shall be swallowed up?" (Job xxxvii. 20.)

Reader, these are serious questions. They are questions which must and will occur to thoughtful minds. There are many who know what Luther meant, when he said, "I dare not have anything to do with an absolute God." But I thank God, they are questions to which the Gospel supplies a full and satisfactory answer. The Gospel reveals One who is exactly suited to the wants of souls which desire to confess sin.

I say then that sin ought to be confessed to God in Christ.—I say that sin ought specially to be confessed to God manifest in the flesh,—to Christ Jesus the Lord,—to that Jesus who came into the world to save sinners,—to that Jesus who died for our sins, and rose again for our justification, and now lives at the right hand of God to intercede for all who come to God by Him. He that desires to confess sin, should apply direct to Christ.

Christ is a great High Priest. Let that truth sink down into our hearts, and never be forgotten. He is sealed and appointed by God the Father for that very purpose. It is His peculiar office to receive and hear, and pardon and absolve sinners. It is His place to re-

ceive confessions and to grant plenary absolutions. It is written in Scripture, "Thou art a priest for ever." "We have a great high priest that is passed into the heavens." "Having an High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith." (Heb. iv. 14; vi. 20; x. 21, 22.)

Christ is a High Priest of Almighty *power*. There is no sin that He cannot pardon, and no sinner that He cannot absolve. He is very God of very God. He is "over all, God blessed for ever." He says Himself, "I and my Father are one." He has "all power in heaven and earth." He has "power on earth to forgive sins." He has complete authority to say to the chief of sinners, "Thy sins are forgiven. Go in peace." He has the keys of death and hell." When He opens, no man can shut. (Rom. ix. 5. John x. 30. Matt. xxviii. 18. Matt. ix. 6. Luke vii. 48—50. Rev. i. 18; iii. 7.)

Christ is a High Priest of infinite *willingness* to receive confession of sin. He invites all who feel their guilt to come to Him for relief. "Come unto me," He says, "all ye that labour and are heavy-laden and I will give you rest." "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." When the penitent thief cried to Him on the cross, He at once absolved him fully, and gave him an answer of peace. (Matt. xi. 28. John vii. 37.)

Christ is a High Priest of perfect *knowledge*. He knows exactly the whole history of all who confess to Him. From Him no secrets are hid. He never errs in judgment. He makes no mistakes. It is written that "He is of quick understanding. He shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the

hearing of his ears." (Isaiah xi. 3.) He can discern the difference between the hypocritical professor who is full of words, and the broken-hearted sinner who can scarce stammer out His confession. People may deceive ministers by "good words and fair speeches," but they will never deceive Christ.

Christ is a High Priest of matchless *tenderness*. He will not afflict willingly, or grieve any soul that comes to Him. He will handle delicately every wound that is exposed to Him. He will deal tenderly even with the vilest sinners, as he did with the Samaritan woman. Confidence reposed in Him is never abused. Secrets confided to Him are completely safe. Of Him it is written, that "He will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax." He is one that "despiseth not any." (Isaiah xlii. 3. Job xxxvi. 5.)

Christ is a High Priest who *can sympathize* with all that confess to Him. He knows the heart of a man by experience, for He had a body like our own, and was made in the likeness of man. "We have not a High Priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points like as we are, yet without sin." (Heb iv. 15.) To Him the words can most truly be applied, which Elihu applied to himself, "Behold, I am according to thy wish in God's stead: I also am formed out of the clay. Behold, my terror shall not make thee afraid, neither shall my hand be heavy upon thee." (Job xxxiii. 6, 7.)

Reader, this great High Priest is the person whom you and I ought specially to employ in our confession of sin. It is only through Him and by Him that we should

make all our approaches to God. In Him we may draw near to God with boldness, and have access with confidence. (Ephes. iii. 12.) Laying our hand on Him and His atonement, we may "come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." (Heb. iv. 16.) We need no other mediator or priest. We can find no better High Priest. To whom should the sick man disclose his ailment, but the physician? To whom should the prisoner tell his story, but to his legal advocate? To whom should the sinner open his heart and confess his sins but to Christ?

- Why should we confess our sins to angels and dead saints, while we have Christ for a High Priest? Why should we confess to the Virgin Mary, Michael the archangel, John the Baptist, St. Paul, or any other creature in the unseen world? The Church of Rome enjoins such confession as this on her millions of members, and many members of the Church of England seem half-disposed to think the Church of Rome is right. But when we ask a reason for the practice, we may ask long without getting an answer.

There is *no need* for such a confession. Christ has not given up His office, and ceased to be a Priest. The saints and angels cannot possibly do more for us than Christ can. They certainly have not more pity or compassion, or goodwill towards our souls.

There is *no warrant of Scripture* for such a confession. There is not a text in the Bible that bids us confess to dead saints and angels. There is not an instance in Scripture of any living believer taking his sins to them.

There is not the slightest proof that there is *any use* in such a confession. We do not even know that the saints in glory can hear what we say. Much less do we know that they could help us if they heard. They were all sinners saved by grace themselves. Where is the likelihood that they could do anything to aid our souls?

Reader, the man who turns away from Christ to confess to saints and angels, is a deluded robber of his own soul. He is following a shadow and forsaking the substance. He is rejecting the bread of life and trying to satisfy his spiritual hunger with sand.

But why, again, should we confess our sins to living priests and ministers, while we have Christ for a High Priest? The Church of Rome commands her members to do so. A party within the Church of England approves the practice as useful, helpful, and almost needful to the soul. But, again, when we ask for Scripture and reason in support of the practice, we receive no satisfactory answer.*

* The only passages in the Prayer-book of the Church of England which appear at first sight to favour the Romish view of confession and absolution are to be found in the exhortation in the Communion service, and in the visitation of the Sick.

In both these cases I am entirely satisfied that the Reformers never *intended* to give any countenance to the Romish doctrine, and that the true and honest interpretation of the language used, affords no help to those who hold that doctrine.

In the Exhortation in the Communion Service, the case is supposed of some person who "cannot quiet his conscience." The advice then follows, "Let him come to me, or to some other discrete and learned minister of God's holy word, and open his grief; that by the ministry of God's holy word he may receive the benefit of absolution, together with ghostly counsel and advice."

Is there *any need* for confessing to priests or ministers? There is none. There is nothing they can do for a sinner that Christ cannot do a thousand times better. When Christ has failed the soul that cried to Him, it may be time to turn to ministers. But that time will *never* come.

Is there *any Scriptural warrant* for confessing to priests or ministers? There is none. There is not a passage in the New Testament which commands it. St. Paul writes three epistles to Timothy and Titus about ministerial duty. But he says nothing about receiving confessions.—St. James bids us “confess our faults to one another,” but he says nothing about confessing to

If men are determined to twist this passage into a sanction of the Romish doctrine of confession and absolution, it is useless to reason with them. To my own eyes the exhortation seems nothing more than advice to people who are troubled with difficulties, to go and speak to a minister in private about them, and to get them cleared up by texts from the Bible.

But I can see nothing in the passage like Romish auricular confession and priestly absolution.

In the visitation of the sick, the language used about absolving the sick man, “if he humbly and heartily desire it,” is undoubtedly very strong, and the direction to “move” the sick person to “make a special confession of his sins, if he feel his conscience troubled with any mighty matter,” is unmistakeable.

Yet, even here, it is hard to prove that this confession means more than any faithful minister of the Gospel would press on any sick and dying person, if he saw him “troubled,” or distressed about “some mighty matter.” It is only in this case, be it remembered, that he is to be “moved to make” it.

As to the absolution, the most that can be made of it, is that it is *declaratory*. It is a very strong and authoritative declaration of the forgiveness of the Gospel, addressed to a dying person, in need of special comfort. It is the custom of the Prayer-book to

ministers.—Above all there is not a single example in the Bible of any one confessing to a minister and receiving absolution. We see the apostles often declaring plainly the way of forgiveness, and pointing men to Christ. But we nowhere find them telling men to confess to them, and offering to absolve them after confession.

Finally, is *any good likely to result* from confessing to priests or ministers? I answer boldly, there is none. Ministers can never know that those who confess to them are telling the truth. Those who confess to them will never feel their consciences really satisfied, and will never feel certain that what they confess will not be improperly used. Above all, facts, stubborn facts,

call any ministerial declaration of God's willingness to pardon those who repent and believe, an "absolution." We see this very plainly in the beginning of the morning and afternoon service. After the general confession, the minister reads what is called "an absolution."

The language of the absolution in the "visitation of the sick" is undoubtedly very strong. But still it must be observed that it only declares a person absolved, who is already absolved by God. The very form itself says that the Church's absolution is to be given to "all sinners who truly repent and believe in Jesus Christ." Now all such are of course pardoned the very moment they repent and believe. When therefore the minister says "I absolve thee," he can only mean, "I declare thee absolved."

When I add to this explanation the striking fact that the Homily of Repentance contains a long passage most strongly condemning auricular confession, I can see no fair ground for the charge that the Church of England sanctions auricular confession. At the same time I deeply regret that the formularies of the Church contain any expressions which are capable of being twisted into an argument in defence of the doctrine, and should rejoice to see them removed.

Those who wish to examine the subject further, are referred to an extract from the Homily of Repentance at the end of this subject.

abound to show that the practice of confessing to ministers, has often led to the grossest and most disgusting immorality. A living writer has truly said, "There is no better school of wickedness on earth than the confessional. History testifies that for every offender whom the confessional has reclaimed, it has hardened thousands ;—for one it may have saved it has destroyed millions." (Wylie on Popery, p. 329.)

Reader, the man who turns away from Christ to confess his sins to ministers, is like a man who chooses to live in prison when he may walk at liberty, or to starve and go in rags in the midst of riches and plenty, or to cringe for favours at the feet of a servant, when he may go boldly to the Master, and ask what he will. A mighty and sinless High Priest is provided for him, and yet he prefers to employ the aid of mere fellow sinners like himself ! He is trying to fill his purse with rubbish when he may have fine gold for the asking. He is insisting on lighting a rush light, when he may enjoy the noon-day light of God's sun !

Reader, if you love your soul, beware of giving to ministers the honour that belongs to Christ alone. He is the true High Priest of the Christian's profession. He ever lives to receive confessions, and to absolve sinners. Why should we turn away from Him to man ? Above all, beware of the whole system of the Romish confessional. Of all practices that were ever devised by man, in the name of religion, I firmly believe that none was ever devised so mischievous and objectionable as the confessional. It overthrows Christ's office, and places man in the seat which should only be occupied

by the Son of God.—It puts two sinners in a thoroughly wrong position.—It exalts the confessor far too high. It places those who confess far too low.—It gives the confessor a place which it is not safe for any child of Adam to occupy. It imposes on those who confess a bondage to which it is not safe for any child of Adam to submit.—It sinks one poor sinner into the degrading attitude of a serf. It raises another poor sinner into a dangerous mastery over his brother's soul.—It makes the confessor little less than a god. It makes those who confess little better than slaves.—If you love Christian liberty, if you value inward peace, remember the advice I give you this day. Beware, beware of the slightest approach to the Romish confessional !

Listen not to those who tell you that Christian ministers were intended to receive confessions, and that Evangelical teaching makes light of the ministerial office, and strips it of all authority and power. Such assertions are more easily made than proved. We honour the minister's office highly, but we refuse to give it a hair's breadth more dignity than we find given in the Word of God. We honour ministers as Christ's ambassadors, Christ's messengers, Christ's watchmen, helpers of believers' joy, preachers of the Word, and stewards of the mysteries of God. But we decline to regard them as priests, mediators, confessors, and rulers over men's faith, both for the sake of their souls and of our own.*

* It should always be remembered, that the word "priest" in the Prayer-book, was not intended to mean a sacrificing priest, like the Old Testament priests. It signifies the same as presbyter or elder.

Listen not to those who tell you that Evangelical teaching is opposed to the exercise of soul-discipline, or heart-examination, or self-humiliation, or mortification of the flesh, or true contrition. Opposed to it! There never was a more baseless assertion. We are entirely favourable to it. This only we require, that it shall be carried on in the right way. We approve of a confessional; but it must be the only true one, the throne of grace.—We approve of going to a confessor; but it must be the true One, Christ the Lord.—We approve of submitting consciences to a priest; but it must be to the great High Priest, Jesus the Son of God.—We approve of unbosoming our secret sins, and seeking absolution; but it must be at the feet of the great Head of the Church, and not at the feet of one of His weak members.—We approve of kneeling to receive ghostly counsel; but it must be at the feet of Christ, and not at the feet of man.

Reader, beware of ever losing sight of Christ's priestly office. Glory in His atoning death. Honour Him as your substitute and surety on the cross. Follow Him as your Shepherd. Hear His voice as your prophet. Obey Him as your King. But in all your thoughts about Christ, let it be often before your mind, that He alone is your High Priest, and that He has deputed His priestly office to no order of men in the world.* This is the office

* The passage, "Whosoever sins ye remit they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain they are retained," (John xx. 23,) is often quoted in defence of the Romish view of priestly absolution, but I am firmly persuaded, in entire contradiction to our Lord's intention.

of Christ, which Satan labours above all to obscure. It is the neglect of this office which leads to every kind of error. It is the remembrance of this office which is the best safe-guard against the plausible teaching of the Church of Rome. Once right about this office you will never greatly err in the matter of the confession of sin. You will know to whom confession ought to be made ;—and to know that rightly is no slight thing.

And now, reader, I shall conclude this subject with three words of practical application. You have seen who ought to confess sin. You have seen to whom confession ought to be made. Give me your attention a little longer while I try to bring the matter nearer to your heart and conscience. Our years are rolling fast away. Time flies very quickly. Writing and preaching,—reading and working,—doubting and speculating,—discussion and controversy,—all, all will soon be past and gone for ever. Yet a little while and there will remain nothing but certainties, realities, and eternity. Give me, I say again, your attention, while I plead with you once more about your soul. I mean nothing but your good,—God is witness. Then take what I say in good part.

I believe that our Lord conferred on His apostles, in these words the power of authoritatively declaring whose sins are forgiven, and whose sins are not forgiven, but nothing more.—I believe moreover that from their peculiar gift of discerning spirits, the apostles were fitted and enabled to exercise this power of declaring, in a way that no minister, since the apostolic times, ever can or ever did.

But that the apostles ever took on themselves to “remit or retain sins,” in the way that the Romish Church enjoins on her priests to do, is not to be traced out in any passage in the whole New Testament.

1. My first word of application shall be *a question*. That question is neither more or less than the heading of the subject you are reading. I ask you, DO YOU CONFESS?

You know my meaning in asking this question. I trust the pages you have already read make that sufficiently plain. I do not ask you now what your opinion is about matters controverted in the present day. I ask you a plain practical question,—Do you know anything of the daily habit of confessing sin to God?

You will not pretend to say you have no sins at all. Few, probably, are so blind and ignorant in the present day as to say that. But what do you do with your sins?—What measures do you take about your sins?—Do you use any steps to get rid of your sins?—Do you ever speak to any one about your sins?—Answer these questions, I do beseech you, to your own conscience. Whether you are rich or poor, old or young, churchman or dissenter, matters little. But it does matter a great deal whether you can reply to the inquiry of this subject,—Do you confess your sins?

Reader, if you know nothing of the habit of confessing sin, I have only one remark to make,—YOUR SOUL IS IN IMMINENT DANGER! There is but a step between you and hell. If you die as you are, you will be lost for ever. The kingdom of God contains no silent subjects. The citizens of the heavenly city are a people who have all known, and felt, and confessed their sins.

I give you one simple warning. You will have to confess your sins one day, whether you will or no. When the great white throne is set, and the books are

opened, your sins will at last be exposed before the whole world. The secrets of all hearts will be revealed. You will have to acknowledge your transgressions before the eyes of an assembled world, and an innumerable company of angels. Your confession at last will be most public; and, worst of all, your confession will be too late!

Where is the man who would not shrink from the idea of such an exposure? Where is the woman whose spirit would not fail at the very possibility of such a confession as this? Reader, this public confession will be the portion of millions. Take heed lest it be your's. Oh! think, think, think upon the question before you. DO YOU CONFESS?

2. My second word of application shall be *an invitation*. I address it to all who have neglected confession of sin in time past, and are ashamed of their neglect. I invite you in my Master's name to BEGIN THE HABIT OF CONFESSION WITHOUT DELAY.

Go this very day to the throne of grace, and speak to the great High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ, about your soul. Pour out your heart before Him. Keep nothing back from Him. Acknowledge your iniquities to Him, and entreat Him to cleanse them away. Say to Him, in David's words, "For thy name's sake pardon my iniquity, for it is great."—"Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities."—Cry to Him as the publican did in the parable, "God be merciful to me a sinner." (Psalm xxv. 11: li. 9. Luke xviii. 13.)

Reader, are you afraid to do this? Do you feel unworthy and unfit to begin? I do entreat you to resist such feelings, and to begin without delay. There are glorious Bible examples to encourage you. There are rich Bible promises to lure you on. In all the volume of Scripture there are no passages so encouraging as those which are about confession of sin. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John i. 8.) "If any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which is right, and it profited me not; He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light." (Job xxxiii. 27.) "Father," said the prodigal son, "I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servant, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring hither the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and be merry." (Luke xv. 21—23.) Arise, dear reader, and call upon God. If Christ had never died for sinners, there might be some excuse for doubting. But Christ having suffered for sin, there is nothing that need keep you back. Only acknowledge your iniquity, and cast yourself wholly on God's mercy in Christ, and life, eternal life, shall be your own. "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made white as snow: though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." (Isaiah i. 18.) But Oh! reader, begin, begin to confess without delay. This very day BEGIN TO CONFESS YOUR SIN.

3. My last word of application shall be *an exhortation*. I address it to all who have been taught by the Holy Ghost to confess their sins, and know the subject of this tract by inward experience. I exhort them TO KEEP UP THE HABIT OF CONFESSION to the last day of their lives.

My believing brethren, we shall never cease to be sinners as long as we are in the body. Every day we shall find something to deplore in our thoughts, or motives, or words, or deeds. Every day we shall find that we need the blood of sprinkling, and the intercession of Christ. Then let us keep up daily transactions with the throne of grace. Let us daily confess our infirmities at the feet of our merciful and faithful High Priest, and seek fresh absolution. Let us daily cast ourselves under the shadow of His wings, and cry, "Surely in me dwelleth no good thing: Thou art my hiding-place, O Lamb of God!"

May every year find us more humble and yet more hopeful,—more sensible of our own unworthiness and yet more ready to rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh!—May our prayers become every year more fervent, and our confessions of sin more real;—our eye more single, and our walk with God more close;—our knowledge of Jesus more clear, and our love to Jesus more deep;—our citizenship in heaven more manifest, and our separation from the world more distinct!

So living, we shall cross the waves of this troublesome world with comfort, and have an abundant entrance into God's kingdom. So living, we shall find that our

light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Yet a few more years and our prayers and confessions shall cease for ever! We shall begin an endless life of praise. We shall exchange our daily confessions for eternal thanksgiving.*

* The attention of all members of the Church of England is particularly requested to the following passages from the 'HOMILY OF REPENTANCE':

"Whereas the adversaries [Roman Catholics] wrest this place [in St. James—(James v.)—], for to maintain their auricular confession withal, they are greatly deceived themselves, and do shamefully deceive others; for if this text ought to be understood of auricular confession, then the priests are as much bound to confess themselves unto the lay-people, as the lay-people are bound to confess themselves to them. And if to pray is to absolve, then the laity by this place hath as great authority to absolve the priests, as the priests have to absolve the laity."

"And where that they do allege this saying of our Saviour Jesus Christ unto the leper, to prove auricular confession to stand on God's word. *Go thy way, and show thyself unto the priest*; Matt. viii. do they not see that the leper was cleansed from his leprosy before he was by Christ sent unto the priest, for to show himself unto him? By the same reason we must be cleansed from our spiritual leprosy, I mean our sins must be forgiven us, before that we can come to confession. What need we then to tell forth our sins into the ear of the priest, sith that they be already taken away? Therefore holy Ambrose, in his second sermon upon the hundred and nineteenth Psalm, doth say full well, *Go show thyself unto the priest*. Who is the true priest, but he which is the Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedech? Whereby this holy Father doth understand that both the priesthood and the law being changed, we ought to acknowledge none other priest for deliverance from our sins but our Saviour Jesus Christ, who, being Sovereign Bishop, doth with the sacrifice of his body and blood, offered once for ever upon the altar of the cross, most effectually cleanse the spiritual leprosy, and wash away the sins of all those that with true confession of the same do flee unto Him.

"It is most evident and plain, that this auricular confession hath not the warrant of God's word, else it had not been lawful for Nectarius, bishop of Constantinople, upon a just occasion to have put it down. (*Nectarius Sozomen. Eccles. Hist. lib. vii. cap. 16.*) For when anything ordained of God is by the lewdness of men abused, the abuse ought to be taken away, and the thing itself suffered to remain. Moreover, these are St. Augustine's words: *Lib. x. Confessionum, cap. 3.* 'What have I to do with men, that they should hear my confession, as though they were able to heal my diseases? A curious sort of men to know another man's life, and slothful to correct and amend their own. Why do they seek to hear of me what I am, which will not hear of thee what they are? And how can they tell, when they hear by me of myself, whether I tell the truth or not; sith no mortal man knoweth what is in man, but the spirit of man which is in him?' Augustine would not have written thus, if auricular confession had been used in his time.

“ Being, therefore, not led with the conscience thereof. let us with fear and trembling, and with a true contrite heart, use that kind of confession that God doth command in his word ; and then doubtless as he is faithful and righteous, he will forgive us our sins, and make us clean from all wickedness. I do not say, but that, if any do find themselves troubled in conscience, they may repair to their learned curate or pastor, or to some other godly learned man, and show the trouble and doubt of their conscience to them, that they may receive at their hand the comfortable salve of God's word : but it is against the true Christian liberty, that any man should be bound to the numbering of his sins, as it hath been used heretofore in the time of blindness and ignorance.”

“He whom thou Lovest is Sick!”*

JOHN XI. 3.

READER,

A text of Scripture stands at the head of this page.

The chapter from which the text is taken is well known to all readers of the Bible. In life-like description, in touching interest, in sublime simplicity, there is no writing in existence that will bear comparison with that chapter. A narrative like this is to my own mind one of the great proofs of the inspiration of Scripture. When I read the story of Bethany, I feel ‘There is something here which the infidel can never account for.’—“This is nothing else but the finger of God.”

The words which I specially dwell upon in this chapter are singularly affecting and instructive. They record the message which Martha and Mary sent to

* The following pages contain the substance of a Sermon originally preached at St. Mary's, Nottingham, on behalf of the County Hospital, in October, 1858.

Jesus when their brother Lazarus was sick:—"Lord, behold he whom thou lovest is sick." That message was short and simple. Yet almost every word is deeply suggestive.

Mark the child-like faith of these holy women. They turned to the Lord Jesus in their hour of need, as the frightened infant turns to its mother, or the compass-needle turns to the pole. They turned to Him as their Master, their Physician, their Shepherd, their Almighty Friend, their Brother born for adversity. Different as they were in natural temperament, the two sisters in this matter were entirely agreed. Christ's help was their first thought in the day of trouble. Christ was the refuge to which they fled in the hour of need. Blessed are all they that do likewise!

Mark the simple humility of their language about Lazarus. They call him "He whom thou lovest." They do not say 'He who loves thee,—believes in thee,—serves thee,' but "He whom thou lovest." Martha and Mary were deeply taught of God. They had learned that Christ's love towards us, and not our love towards Christ, is the true ground of expectation, and the true foundation of hope. Blessed, again, are all they that are taught likewise! To look inward to our love towards Christ is painfully unsatisfying. To look outward to Christ's love towards us is peace.

Mark, lastly, the touching circumstance which the message of Martha and Mary reveals. "He whom thou lovest is sick." Lazarus was a good man, converted, believing, renewed, sanctified, a friend of Christ, and an heir of glory. And yet Lazarus was sick! Then sick-

ness is no sign that God is displeased. Sickness is intended to be a blessing to us, and not a curse. "All things work together for good to them that love God, and are called according to His purpose."—"All things are your's,—life, death, things present or things to come; for ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." (Rom. viii. 28; 1 Cor. iii. 22.) Blessed, I say again, are they that have learned this! Happy are they who can say, when they are ill, "This is my Father's doing. It must be well."

Reader, I invite your attention this day to the subject of sickness. The subject is one which we ought frequently to look in the face. We cannot avoid it. It needs no prophet's eye to see sickness coming to each of us in turn one day. "In the midst of life we are in death." Let us turn aside for a few moments, and consider sickness as Christians. The consideration will not hasten its coming, and by God's blessing may teach us wisdom.

In considering the subject of sickness, three points appear to me to demand attention. On each I shall say a few words.

I. The *universal prevalence* of sickness and disease.

II. The *general benefits* which sickness confers on mankind.

III. The *special duties* to which sickness calls us.

I. The *universal prevalence* of sickness.

I need not dwell long on this point. To say much in proof of it would only be multiplying truisms and heaping up common-places which all allow.

Sickness is every where. In Europe, in Asia, in Africa, in America,—in hot countries, and in cold,—in civilized nations, and in savage tribes,—men, women, and children sicken and die.

Sickness is among all classes. Grace does not lift a believer above the reach of it. Riches will not buy exemption from it. Rank cannot prevent its assaults. Kings and their subjects, masters and servants, rich men and poor, learned and unlearned, teachers and scholars, doctors and patients, ministers and hearers, all alike go down before this great foe. "The rich man's wealth is his strong city." (Prov. xviii. 11.) The Englishman's house is called his castle. But there are no doors and bars which can keep out disease and death.

Sickness is of every sort and description. From the crown of our head to the sole of our foot we are liable to disease. Our capacity of suffering is something fearful to contemplate. Who can count up the ailments by which our bodily frame may be assailed? Who ever visited a museum of morbid anatomy without a shudder? "Strange that a harp of thousand strings should keep in tune so long." It is not, to my mind, so wonderful that men should die so soon, as it is that they should live so long.

Sickness is often one of the most humbling and distressing trials that can come upon man. It can turn the strongest into a little child, and make him feel "the

grasshopper a burden." (Eccles. xii. 5.) It can unnerve the boldest, and make him tremble at the fall of a pin. We are "fearfully and wonderfully made." (Psalm cxxxix. 14.) The connection between body and mind is curiously close. The influence that some diseases can exercise upon the temper and spirits is immensely great. There are ailments of brain, and liver, and nerves, which can bring down a Solomon in mind to a state little better than that of a babe. He that would know to what depths of humiliation poor man can fall, has only to attend for a short time on sick-beds.

Sickness is not preventible by anything that man can do. The average duration of life may doubtless be somewhat lengthened. The skill of doctors may continually discover new remedies, and effect surprising cures. The enforcement of wise sanitary regulations may greatly lower the death-rate in a land. But, after all,—whether in healthy or unhealthy localities,—whether in mild climates or in cold,—whether treated by homœopathy or allopathy,—men will sicken and die. "The days of our years are three-score years and ten, and if by reason of strength they be four-score years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away." (Psalm xc. 10.) That witness is indeed true. It was true 3300 years ago.—It is true still. Now what can we make of this great fact,—the universal prevalence of sickness? How shall we account for it? What explanation can we give of it? What answer shall we give to our inquiring children, when they ask us, "Father, why do people

get ill and die?" These are grave questions. A few words upon them will not be out of place.

Can we suppose for a moment that God created sickness and disease at the beginning? Can we imagine that He who formed our world in such perfect order, was the former of needless suffering and pain? Can we think that He who made all things "very good," made Adam's race to sicken and to die? The idea is, to mind, revolting. It introduces a grand imperfection into the midst of God's perfect works. I must find another solution to satisfy my mind.

The only explanation that satisfies me is that which the Bible gives. Something has come into the world which has dethroned man from his original position, and stripped him of his original privileges. Something has come in, which, like a handful of gravel in the midst of machinery, has marred the perfect order of God's creation. And what is that *something*? I answer, in one word, it is sin. "Sin has entered into the world, and death by sin." (Rom. v. 12.) Sin is the cause of all the sickness and disease and pain and suffering, which prevail on the earth. They are all a part of that curse which came into the world when Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit and fell. There would have been no sickness if there had been no fall. There would have been no disease, if there had been no sin.

Reader, I pause for a moment at this point, and yet, in pausing, I do not depart from my subject. I pause to remind you that there is no ground so untenable as that which is occupied by the Atheist, and Deist, or the unbeliever in the Bible. I advise every young reader

of this subject, who is puzzled by the bold and specious arguments of the infidel, to study well that most important subject,—the Difficulties of infidelity. I say boldly that it requires far more credulity to be an infidel than to be a Christian. I say boldly, that there are great broad patent facts in the condition of mankind, which nothing but the Bible can explain, and that one of the most striking of these facts is the universal prevalence of pain, sickness, and disease. In short, one of the mightiest difficulties in the way of Atheists and Deists, is *the body of man*.

Reader, you have doubtless heard of Atheists. An Atheist is one who professes to believe that there is no God, no Creator, no First Cause, and that all things came together in this world by mere chance.—Now shall we listen to such a doctrine as this? Go, take an Atheist to one of the excellent surgical schools of our land, and ask him to study the wonderful structure of the human body. Show him the matchless skill with which every joint, and vein, and valve, and muscle, and sinew, and nerve, and bone, and limb, has been formed. Show him the perfect adaptation of every part of the human frame to the purpose which it serves. Show him the thousand delicate contrivances for meeting wear and tear, and supplying waste of daily vigour. And then ask this man who denies the being of a God, and a great First Cause, if all this wonderful mechanism is the result of chance? . Ask him if it came together at first by luck and accident? Ask him if he so thinks about the watch he looks at, the bread he eats, or the coat he wears? Oh, no! Design is an insuperable difficulty in the Atheist's way. *There is a God.*

Reader, you have doubtless heard of Deists. A Deist is one who professes to believe that there is a God, who made the world and all things therein. But he does not believe the Bible. 'A God, but no Bible!—a Creator, but no Christianity!' This is the Deist's creed.—Now, shall we listen to this doctrine? Go again, I say, and take a Deist to an hospital, and show him some of the awful handiwork of disease. Take him to the bed where lies some tender child, scarce knowing good from evil, with an incurable cancer. Send him to the ward where there is a loving mother of a large family in the last stage of some excruciating disease. Show him some of the racking pains and agonies to which flesh is heir, and ask him to account for them. Ask this man who believes there is a great and wise God, who made the world, but cannot believe the Bible,—ask him how he accounts for these traces of disorder and imperfection in his God's creation. Ask this man who sneers at Christian theology, and is too wise to believe the fall of Adam,—ask him upon his theory to explain the universal prevalence of pain and disease in the world. You may ask in vain! You will get no satisfactory answer. Sickness and suffering are insuperable difficulties in the Deist's way. *Man has sinned, and therefore man suffers.* Adam fell from his first estate, and therefore Adam's children sicken and die.

The universal prevalence of sickness is one of the indirect evidences that the Bible is true. The Bible explains it. The Bible answers the questions about it which will arise in every inquiring mind. No other

systems of religion can do this. They all fail here. They are silent. They are confounded. The Bible alone looks the subject in the face. It boldly proclaims the fact that man is a fallen creature, and with equal boldness proclaims a vast remedial system to meet his wants. I feel shut up to the conclusion, that the Bible is from God. Christianity is a revelation from heaven. "Thy word is truth." (John xvii. 17.)

Reader, stand fast on the old ground that the Bible, and the Bible only, is God's revelation of Himself to man. Be not moved by the many new assaults which modern scepticism is making on the inspired volume. Heed not the hard questions which the enemies of the faith are fond of putting about Bible difficulties, and to which perhaps you often feel unable to give an answer. Anchor your soul firmly on this safe principle, that the whole book is God's truth. Tell the enemies of the Bible that, in spite of all their arguments, there is no book in the world which will bear comparison with the Bible,—none that so thoroughly meets man's wants,—none that explains so much of the state of mankind. As to the hard things in the Bible, tell them you are content to wait. You find enough plain truth in the book to satisfy your conscience and to save your soul. The hard things will be cleared up one day. What you know not now, you will know hereafter.

II. The second point I propose to consider is, *the general benefits which sickness confers on mankind.*

Reader, I use that word "benefits" advisedly. I feel it of deep importance to see this part of our subject

clearly. I know well that sickness is one of the supposed weak points in God's government of the world, on which sceptical minds love to dwell.—“Can God be a God of love, when He allows pain? Can God be a God of mercy, when He permits disease? He might prevent pain and disease; but he does not. How can these things be?” Such is the reasoning which often comes across the heart of man.

I reply to all such reasoners, that their doubts and questionings are most unreasonable. They might as well doubt the existence of a Creator, because the order of the universe is disturbed by earthquakes, hurricanes, and storms. They might as well doubt the providence of God, because of the horrible massacres of Delhi and Cawnpore. All this would be just as reasonable as to doubt the mercy of God, because of the presence of sickness in the world.

I ask all who find it hard to reconcile the prevalence of disease and pain with the love of God, to cast their eyes on the world around them, and mark what is going on. I ask them to observe the extent to which men constantly submit to present loss for the sake of future gain,—present sorrow for the sake of future joy,—present pain for the sake of future health. The seed is thrown into the ground, and rots: but we sow in the hope of a future harvest. The boy is sent to school amidst many tears: but we send him in the hope of his getting future wisdom. The father of a family undergoes some fearful surgical operation: but he bears it, in the hope of future health.—I ask men to apply this great principle to God's government of the world. I

ask them to believe that God allows pain, sickness and disease, not because he loves to vex man, but because He desires to benefit man's heart, and mind, and conscience, and soul, to all eternity.

Reader, once more I repeat, that I speak of the "benefits" of sickness on purpose and advisedly. I know the suffering and pain which sickness entails. I admit the misery and wretchedness which it often brings in its train. But I cannot regard it as an unmixed evil. I see in it a wise permission of God. I see in it a useful provision to check the ravages of sin and the devil among men's souls. If man had never sinned I should have been at a loss to discern the benefit of sickness. But since sin is in the world, I can see that sickness is a good. It is a blessing quite as much as a curse. It is a rough schoolmaster, I grant. But it is a real friend to man's soul.

Sickness helps to *remind men of death*. The most live as if they were never going to die. They follow business, or pleasure, or politics, or science, as if earth was their eternal home. They plan and scheme for the future, like the rich fool in the parable, as if they had a long lease of life, and were not tenants at will. A heavy illness sometimes goes far to dispel these delusions. It awakens men from their day-dreams and reminds them that they have to die as well as to live. Now this I say emphatically is a mighty good.

Sickness helps to *make men think seriously* of God, and their souls and the world to come. The most in their days of health can find no time for such thoughts. They dislike them. They put them away. They

count them troublesome and disagreeable. Now a severe disease has sometimes a wonderful power of mustering and rallying these thoughts, and bringing them up before the eyes of a man's soul. Even a wicked king like Benhadad, when sick, could think of Elisha. (2 Kings viii. 8.) Even heathen sailors, when death was in sight, were afraid, and "cried every man to his god." (Jonah i. 5.) Surely anything that helps to make men think is a good.

Sickness helps to *soften men's hearts*, and teach them wisdom. The natural heart is as hard as a stone about religion. It can see no good in anything which is not of this life, and no happiness excepting in this world. A long illness sometimes goes far to correct these ideas. It exposes the emptiness and hollowness of what the world calls "good" things, and teaches us to hold them with a loose hand. The man of business finds that money alone is not everything the heart requires. The woman of the world finds that costly apparel, and novel-reading, and the reports of balls and operas, are miserable comforters in a sick room. Surely anything that obliges us to alter our weights and measures of earthly things is a real good.

Sickness helps to *level and humble us*. We are all naturally proud and high-minded. Few, even of the poorest, are free from the infection. Few are to be found who do not look down on somebody else, and secretly flatter themselves that they are "not as other men." A sick bed is a mighty tamer of such thoughts as these. It forces on us the mighty truth that we are all poor worms, that we "dwell in houses of clay," and

are "crushed before the moth," and that kings and subjects, masters and servants, rich and poor, are all dying creatures, and will soon stand side by side at the bar of God. In the sight of the coffin, and the grave, it is not easy to be proud. Surely anything that teaches that lesson is a good.

Finally, sickness helps to *try men's religion*, of what sort it is. There are not many on earth who have no religion at all. Yet few have a religion that will bear inspection. Most are content with traditions received from their fathers, and can render no reason of the hope that is in them. Now disease is sometimes most useful to a man in exposing the utter worthlessness of his soul's foundation. It often shows him that he has nothing solid under his feet, and nothing firm under his hand. It makes him find out that, with all his form of religion, he has been all his life worshipping "an unknown God." Many a creed looks well on the smooth waters of health, which turns out utterly unsound and useless on the rough waves of the sick bed. The storms of winter often bring out the defects in a man's dwelling, and sickness often exposes the gracelessness of a man's soul. Surely anything that makes us find out the real character of our faith is a good.

Reader, I do not say that sickness confers these benefits on all to whom it comes. Alas! I can say nothing of the kind. Myriads are yearly laid low by illness, and restored to health, who evidently learn no lesson from their sick beds, and return again to the world. Myriads are yearly passing through sickness to the grave, and yet receiving no more spiritual impression

from it than the beasts that perish. While they live they have no feeling, and when they die there are "no bands in their death." (Psalm lxxiii. 4.) These are awful things to say. But they are true. The degree of deadness to which man's heart and conscience may attain, is a depth which I cannot pretend to fathom.

But does sickness confer the benefits of which I have been speaking on only a few? I will allow nothing of the kind. I believe that in a vast proportion of cases, sickness produces impressions more or less akin to those of which I have just been speaking. I believe that in many cases sickness is God's day of visitation, and that feelings are continually aroused on a sick bed, which if improved might, by God's grace, result in salvation. I believe that in heathen lands sickness often paves the way for the missionary, and makes the poor idolater lend a willing ear to the glad tidings of the Gospel. I believe that in our own land sickness is one of the greatest aids to the minister of the gospel, and that sermons and counsels are often brought home in the day of disease which men have neglected in the day of health. I believe that sickness is one of God's most important subordinate instruments in the saving of men, and that though the feelings it calls forth are often temporary, it is also often a means whereby the Spirit works effectually on the heart. In short, I believe firmly that the sickness of men's bodies, has often led, in God's wonderful providence, to the conversion of men's souls.

I leave this branch of my subject here. It needs no further remark. If sickness can do the things of which I have been speaking, (and who will gainsay it?) if

sickness in a wicked world can help to make men think of God and their souls, then sickness confers benefits on mankind.

We have no right to murmur at sickness, and to repine at its presence in the world. We ought rather to thank God for it. It is God's witness. It is the soul's adviser. It is an awakener to the conscience. It is a purifier to the heart. Surely I have a right to tell you that sickness is a blessing and not a curse,—a help and not an injury,—a gain and not a loss,—a friend, and not a foe to mankind. So long as we have a world wherein there is sin, it is a mercy that it is a world wherein there is sickness.

III. The third and last point which I propose to consider, is *the special duties which the prevalence of sickness entails on each one of ourselves.*

I should be sorry to leave the subject of sickness without saying something on this point. I hold it to be of cardinal importance not to be content with generalities in delivering God's message to souls. I am anxious to impress on each one into whose hands this book may fall, his own personal responsibility in connection with the subject. I would fain have no one lay down this book, unable to answer the questions: What practical lesson have I learned? What, in a world of disease and death, what ought I to do?

One paramount duty which the prevalence of sickness entails on man, is that of *living habitually prepared to meet God.* Sickness is a remembrancer of death. Death is the door through which we must all pass to

judgment. Judgment is the time, when we must at last see God face to face. Surely the first lesson which the inhabitant of a sick and dying world should learn, should be to prepare to meet his God.

Reader, when are you prepared to meet God? Never till your iniquities are forgiven, and your sin covered! Never till your heart is renewed, and your will taught to delight in the will of God! You have many sins. If you go to church your own mouth is taught to confess this every Sunday. The blood of Jesus Christ can alone cleanse those sins away. The righteousness of Christ can alone make you acceptable in the sight of God. Faith, simple child-like faith, can alone give you an interest in Christ and His benefits. Would you know whether you are prepared to meet God? Then where is your faith?—Your heart is naturally unmeet for God's company. You have no real pleasure in doing His will. The Holy Ghost must transform you after the image of Christ. Old things must pass away. All things must become new. Would you know whether you are prepared to meet God? Then, where is your grace? Where are the evidences of your conversion and sanctification?

Reader, I believe that this, and nothing less than this, is preparedness to meet God. Pardon of sin and meetness for God's presence,—justification by faith and sanctification of the heart,—the blood of Christ sprinkled on us, and the Spirit of Christ dwelling in us,—these are the grand essentials of the Christian religion. These are no mere words and names to furnish bones of contention for wrangling theologians. These are sober,

solid, substantial realities. To live in the actual possession of these things, in a world full of sickness and death, is the first duty which I press home upon your soul.

Another paramount duty which the prevalence of sickness entails on you, is that of *living habitually ready to bear it patiently*. Sickness is no doubt a trying thing to flesh and blood. To feel our nerves unstrung, and our natural force abated,—to be obliged to sit still and be cut off from all our usual avocations,—to see our plans broken off and our purposes disappointed,—to endure long hours, and days, and nights of weariness and pain,—all this is a severe strain on poor sinful human nature. What wonder if peevishness and impatience are brought out by disease! Surely in such a dying world as this, we should study patience. How shall we learn to bear sickness patiently, when sickness comes to our turn? We must lay up stores of grace in the time of health. We must seek for the sanctifying influence of the Holy Ghost over our unruly tempers and dispositions. We must make a real business of our prayers, and regularly ask for strength to endure God's will as well as to do it. Such strength is to be had for the asking: "If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it for you." (John xiv. 14.)

I cannot think it needless to dwell on this point. I believe the passive graces of Christianity receive far less notice than they deserve. Meekness, gentleness, long suffering, faith, patience, are all mentioned in the word of God as "fruits of the Spirit." They are passive graces which specially glorify God. They often make

men think, who despise the active side of the Christian character. Never do these graces shine so brightly as they do in the sick room. They enable many a sick person to preach a silent sermon, which those around him never forget. Would you adorn the doctrine you profess? Would you make your Christianity beautiful in the eyes of others? Then take the hint I give you this day. Lay up a store of patience against the time of illness. Then though your sickness be not to death, it shall be for the "glory of God." (John xi. 4.)

One more paramount duty which the prevalence of sickness entails on you, is that of *habitual readiness to feel with and help your fellow men*. Sickness is never very far from us. Few are the families who have not some sick relative. Few are the parishes where you will not find some one ill. But wherever there is sickness, there is a call to duty. A little timely assistance in some cases,—a kindly visit in others,—a friendly inquiry,—a mere expression of sympathy, may do vast good. These are the sort of things which soften asperities, and bring men together, and promote good feeling. These are ways by which you may ultimately lead men to Christ and save their souls. These are good works to which every professing Christian should be ready. In a world full of sickness and disease we ought to "bear one another's burdens," and to be "kind one to another." (Gal. vi. 2; Ephes. iv. 32.)

These things, I dare say, may appear to some little and trifling. They must needs be doing something great and grand, and striking, and heroic! I take leave to say, that conscientious attention to these little acts of

brotherly-kindness, is one of the clearest evidences of having "the mind of Christ." They are acts in which our blessed Master Himself was abundant. He was ever going about doing good to the sick and sorrowful. They are acts to which He attaches great importance in that most solemn passage of Scripture, the description of the last judgment. He says there: "I was sick, and ye visited me." (Matt. xxv. 36.)

Reader, have you any desire to prove the reality of your charity, that blessed grace which so many talk of, and so few practice? If you have, beware of unfeeling selfishness, and neglect of your sick brethren. Search them out. Assist them, if they need aid. Show your sympathy with them. Try to lighten their burdens. Above all, strive to do good to their souls. It will do you good, if it does no good to them. It will keep your heart from murmuring. It may prove a blessing to your own soul. I firmly believe that God is testing and proving us by every case of sickness within our reach. By permitting suffering, He tries whether Christians have any feeling. Beware, lest you be weighed in the balances, and found wanting. If you can live in a sick and dying world, and not feel for others, you have yet much to learn.

I leave this branch of my subject here. I throw out the points I have named as suggestions, and I pray God that they may work in your mind. I repeat, that habitual preparedness to meet God,—habitual readiness to suffer patiently,—habitual willingness to sympathize heartily, are plain duties which sickness entails on all. They are duties within the reach of every one. I ask

nothing extravagant or unreasonable. I bid no man retire into a monastery and ignore the duties of his station. I only want men to realize that they live in a sick and dying world, and to live accordingly. And I say boldly, that the man who lives the life of faith, and holiness, and patience, and charity, is not only the most true Christian, but the most wise and reasonable man.

And now, I conclude all with four words of practical application. I want the subject of these pages to be turned to some spiritual use. My heart's desire and prayer to God in sending it forth is, to do good to souls.

1. In the first place, I offer a *question* to all who read this book, to which, as God's ambassador, I entreat their serious attention. It is a question which grows naturally out of the subject on which I have been writing. It is a question which concerns all, of every rank, and class, and condition. I ask you, What will you do when you are ill?

The time must come when you, as well as others, must go down the dark valley of the shadow of death. The hour must come, when you, like all your forefathers, must sicken and die. The time may be near or far off. God only knows. But whenever the time may be, I ask again, What are you going to do? Where do you mean to turn for comfort? On what do you mean to rest your soul? On what do you mean to build your hope? From whence will you fetch your consolations?

I do entreat you not to put these questions away. Suffer them to work on your conscience, and rest not till

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you can give them a satisfactory answer. Trifle not with that precious gift, an immortal soul. Defer not the consideration of the matter to a more convenient season. Presume not on a death-bed repentance. The greatest business ought surely not to be left to the last. One dying thief was saved that men might not despair, but only one that none might presume. I repeat the question. I am sure it deserves an answer. "What will you do when you are ill?"

Reader, if you were going to live for ever in this world I would not address you as I do. But it cannot be. There is no escaping the common lot of all mankind. Nobody can die in our stead. The day must come when we must each go to our long home. Against that day I want you to be prepared. The body which now takes up so much of your attention—the body which you now clothe, and feed, and warm with so much care,—that body must return again to the dust. Oh! think what an awful thing it would prove at last, to have provided for everything except the one thing needful,—to have provided for the body, but to have neglected the soul,—to die, in short, and give no sign of being saved! Once more I press my question on your conscience,—“What will you do when you are ill?”

2. In the next place, I offer *counsel* to all who feel they need it and are willing to take it,—to all who feel they are not yet prepared to meet God. That counsel is short and simple. Acquaint yourself with the Lord Jesus Christ without delay. Repent, be converted, flee to Christ, and be saved.

Reader, either you have a soul or you have not. You will surely never deny that you have. Then if you have a soul, seek that soul's salvation. Of all gambling in the world, there is none so reckless as that of the man who lives unprepared to meet God, and yet puts off repentance.—Either you have sins or you have none. If you have (and who will dare to deny it?) break off from those sins, cast away your transgressions, and turn away from them without delay.—Either you need a Saviour or you do not. If you do, flee to the only Saviour this very day, and cry mightily to Him to save your soul. Apply to Christ at once. Seek Him by faith. Commit your soul into His keeping. Cry mightily to Him for pardon and peace with God. Ask Him to pour down the Holy Spirit upon you and make you a thorough Christian. He will hear you. No matter what you have been, He will not refuse your prayer. He has said, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." (John vi. 37.)

Beware, I beseech you, of a vague and indefinite Christianity. Be not content with a general hope that all is right, because you belong to the old Church of England, and that all will be well at last because God is merciful. Rest not, rest not without personal union with Christ Himself. Rest not, rest not till you have the witness of the Spirit in your heart, that you are washed and sanctified, and justified, and one with Christ, and Christ in you. Rest not, till you can say with the apostle, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day." (2 Tim. i. 12.)

Reader, vague, and indefinite, and indistinct religion may do very well in time of health. It will never do in the day of sickness. A mere formal, perfunctory churchmembership may carry a man through the sunshine of youth and prosperity. It will break down entirely when death is in sight. Nothing will do then but real heart-union with Christ. Christ interceding for us at God's right hand,—Christ known and believed as our Priest, our Physician, our Friend,—Christ alone can rob death of its sting, and enable us to face sickness without fear. He alone can deliver those who "through fear of death are in bondage." I say to every one who wants advice, Be acquainted with Christ. As ever you would have hope and comfort on the bed of sickness, be acquainted with Christ.

Take every care and trouble to Him when you are acquainted with Him. He will keep you and carry you through all. Pour out your heart before Him, when your conscience is burdened. He is the true confessor. He alone can absolve you and take the burden away. Turn to Him first in the day of sickness, like Martha and Mary. Keep on looking to Him to the last breath of your life. Christ is worth knowing. The more you know Him the better you will love Him. Then be acquainted with Jesus Christ.

3. In the third place, I exhort all true Christians who read this book to remember how much they may glorify God in the time of sickness, and to *lie quiet in God's hand when they are ill.*

I feel it very important to touch on this point. I

know how ready the heart of a believer is to faint, and how busy Satan is in suggesting doubts and questionings, when the body of a Christian is weak. I have seen something of the depression and melancholy which sometimes comes upon the children of God when they are suddenly laid aside by disease, and obliged to sit still. I have marked how prone some good people are to torment themselves with morbid thoughts at such seasons, and to say in their heart, "God has forsaken me: I am cast out of his sight."

I earnestly entreat all sick believers to remember that they may honour God as much by patient suffering as they can by active work. It often shows more grace to sit still than it does to go to and fro, and perform great exploits. I entreat them to remember that Christ cares for them as much when they are sick as He does when they are well, and that the very chastisement they feel so acutely is sent in love, and not in anger. Above all, I entreat them to recollect the sympathy of Jesus for all His weak members. They are always tenderly cared for by Him, but never so much as in their time of need. Christ has had great experience of sickness. He knows the heart of a sick man. He used to see "all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease" when He was upon earth. He felt specially for the sick in the days of His flesh. He feels for them specially still. Sickness and suffering, I often think, make believers more like their Lord in experience, than health. "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses." (Isaiah liii. 3; Matt. viii. 17.) The Lord Jesus was a "man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." None have

such an opportunity of learning the mind of a suffering Saviour as suffering disciples.

4. I conclude with a word of *exhortation* to all believers, which I heartily pray God to impress upon their souls. I exhort you to keep up a habit of close communion with Christ, and never to be afraid of "going too far" in your religion. Remember this, if you wish to have "great peace" in your times of sickness.

I observe with regret a tendency in some quarters to lower the standard of practical Christianity, and to denounce what are called "extreme views" about a Christian's daily walk in life. I remark with pain that even religious people will sometimes look coldly on those who withdraw from worldly society, and will censure them as "exclusive, narrow-minded, illiberal, uncharitable, sour-spirited," and the like. I warn every believer in Christ who reads this book to beware of being influenced by such censures. I entreat him, if he wants light in the valley of death, to "keep himself unspotted from the world," to "follow the Lord very fully," and to walk very closely with God. (James i. 27; Num. xiv. 24.)

I believe that the want of "thoroughness" about many people's Christianity is one secret of their little comfort, both in health and sickness. I believe that the "half-and-half,"—"keep-in-with-everybody religion," which satisfies many in the present day, is offensive to God, and sows thorns in dying pillows, which hundreds never discover till too late. I believe that the weakness and feebleness of such a religion never comes out so much as it does upon a sick bed.

Reader, if you and I want "strong consolation" in our time of need, we must not be content with a bare union with Christ. We must seek to know something of heart-felt, experimental *communion* with Him. Never, never let us forget, that "union" is one thing, and "communion" another. Thousands, I fear, who know what "union" with Christ is, know nothing of "communion."

The day may come when after a long fight with disease, we shall feel that medicine can do no more, and that nothing remains but to die. Friends will be standing by, unable to help us. Hearing, eye-sight, even the power of praying, will be fast failing us. The world and its shadows will be melting beneath our feet. Eternity, with its realities, will be looming large before our minds. What shall support us in that trying hour? What shall enable us to feel, "I fear no evil?" Nothing, nothing can do it but close communion with Christ. Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith,—Christ putting His right arm under our heads,—Christ felt to be sitting by our side,—Christ alone can give us the complete victory in the last struggle.

Reader, let us cleave to Christ more closely, love Him more heartily, live to Him more thoroughly, copy Him more exactly, confess Him more boldly, follow Him more fully. Religion like this will always bring its own reward. Worldly people may laugh at it. Weak brethren may think it extreme. But it will wear well. At evening time it will bring us light. In sickness it will bring us peace. In the world to come it will give us a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

The time is short. The fashion of this world passeth away. A few more sicknesses, and all will be over. A

few more storms and tossings, and we shall be safe in harbour. We travel towards a world where there is no more sickness,—where parting, and pain, and crying, and mourning, are done with for evermore. Heaven is becoming every year more full, and earth more empty. The friends ahead are becoming more numerous than the friends astern. Yet a little time He that shall come will come, and will not tarry. In His presence shall be fulness of joy. Christ shall wipe away all tears from His people's eyes. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. But he shall be destroyed. Death himself shall one day die. (Rev. xx. 14.)

In the meantime, let us live the life of faith in the Son of God. Let us lean all our weight on Christ, and rejoice in the thought that He lives for evermore.

Yes! blessed be God! Christ lives, though we may die. Christ lives, though friends and family are carried to the grave. He lives who abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light by the Gospel. He lives who said, "O death, I will be thy plagues: O grave, I will be thy destruction." (Hos. xiii. 14.) He lives who will one day change our vile body, and make it like unto His glorious body. In sickness and in health, in life and in death, let us lean confidently on Him. Surely we ought to say daily with one of old, "Blessed be God for Jesus Christ!"

HYMN.

1—One sweetly solemn thought
Comes to me o'er and o'er—
I am nearer home to-day,
Than I ever have been before.

HE WHOM THOU LOVEST IS SICK.

- 2—Nearer my Father's house,
Where the many mansions be ;
Nearer the great white throne ;
Nearer the crystal sea ;
- 3—Nearer the bound of life,
Where we lay our burdens down ;
Nearer leaving the cross ;
Nearer gaining the crown.
- 4—But lying darkly between,
Winding down through the night,
Is the deep and unknown stream,
To be cross'd ere we reach the light.
- 5—Jesus, perfect my trust,
Strengthen the hand of my faith ;
Let me feel Thee near when I stand
On the edge of the shore of death.
- 6—Feel Thee near when my feet
Are slipping over the brink ;
For it may be I'm nearer home—
Nearer now than I think.

CAREY.

Scattered and Gathered.*

JEREMIAH XXXI. 10.

“Hear the Word of the Lord, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock.”

THE text which heads this page is singularly full and comprehensive. It contains both history and prophecy.—It speaks of the scattering of Israel; this is history.—It speaks of the gathering of Israel; this is prophecy.—It demands the attention both of the Jew and the Gentile. To the Jew it holds out a hope;—“Israel,” it says, “shall be gathered.” On the Gentile it lays a command:—“Hear the Word of the Lord,” it says, “O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, He that scattered Israel will gather him.”

Reader, the whole body of Gentile Christendom is

* Originally preached as the Annual Sermon on behalf of the London Society for promoting Christianity among the Jews, at the Rectory Church, Mary-le-bone, in May, 1858.

specially addressed in this text. There is no evading this conclusion on any fair interpretation of Scripture. We ourselves are among the "nations" to whom Jeremiah speaks. Upon us devolves a portion of the duty which he here sets forth. The text is the Lord's voice to all the Churches of Christ among the Gentiles. It is a voice to the Churches of England, Scotland, and Ireland. It is a voice to the Churches of Germany, Switzerland, Sweden, Holland, Denmark, and America. It is a voice to all Christendom. And what does the voice say? It bids us proclaim far and wide the will of God concerning the Jewish nation. It bids us keep one another in memory of God's past and future dealings with Israel. "He that scattered Israel will gather him."

Reader, I ask your serious attention for a few minutes, while I try to place the Jewish subject before you in a connected and condensed form. I propose in these pages to show you from Scripture the past, the present, and the future of Israel. I know few texts in the Bible which contain such a complete summary of the subject as the one before you. This text I shall endeavour to unfold.

I entreat you not to dismiss the subject as speculative, fanciful, and unprofitable. The world is growing old. The last days are come upon us. The foundations of the earth are out of course. The ancient institutions of society are wearing out and going to pieces. The end of all things is at hand. Surely it becomes a wise man, at a time like this, to turn to the pages of prophecy, and inquire what is yet to come. At a time like this

the declarations of God concerning his people Israel ought to be carefully weighed and examined. "At the time of the end," says Daniel, "the wise shall understand." (Dan. xii. 10.)

There are four points on which I purpose to dwell in considering the words of Jeremiah which stand at the head of this subject.

- I. THE MEANING OF THE WORD ISRAEL, BOTH HERE AND ELSEWHERE IN SCRIPTURE.
- II. THE PRESENT CONDITION OF ISRAEL.
- III. THE FUTURE PROSPECTS OF ISRAEL.
- IV. THE DUTY WHICH GENTILE CHURCHES OWE TO ISRAEL.

I. *The meaning of the word Israel.*

The definition of terms is of first importance in theology. Unless we explain the meaning of the words we use in our religious statements, our arguments are often wasted, and we seem like men beating the air.

The word Israel is used nearly seven hundred times in the Bible. I can only discover three senses in which it is used. Firstly,—It is one of the names of Jacob, the father of the twelve tribes; a name specially given to him by God. Secondly,—It is a name given to the ten tribes which separated from Judah and Benjamin in the days of Rehoboam, and became a distinct kingdom. This kingdom is often called Israel, in contradistinction to the kingdom of Judah. Thirdly and lastly,—It is a name given to the whole Jewish nation, to all members

of the twelve tribes which sprung from Jacob, and were brought out of Egypt into the land of Canaan. This is by far the most common signification of the word in the Bible. It is the only signification in which I can find the word Israel used throughout the whole New Testament. It is the same in which the word is used in the text which I am considering this day. That Israel, which God has scattered and will yet gather again, is the whole Jewish nation.

Now, why do I dwell upon this point? To some readers it may appear mere waste of time and words to say so much about it. The things I have been saying sound to them like truisms. That "Israel" means "Israel" is a matter on which they never felt a doubt. If this be the mind of any into whose hands this book has fallen, I am thankful for it. But unhappily there are many Christians who do not see the subject with your eyes. For their sakes I must dwell on this point a little longer.

For many centuries there has prevailed in the Churches of Christ a strange, and to my mind, an unwarrantable mode of dealing with this word "Israel." It has been interpreted in many passages of the Psalms and Prophets, as if it meant nothing more than Christian believers. Have promises been held out to Israel? Men have been told continually that they are addressed to Gentile saints. Have glorious things been described as laid up in store for Israel? Men have been incessantly told that they describe the victories and triumphs of the Gospel in Christian Churches.—The proofs of these things are too many to require quotation. No

man can read the immense majority of commentaries and popular hymns without seeing this system of interpretation to which I now refer. Against that system I have long protested, and I hope I shall always protest as long as I live.

I do not deny that Israel was a peculiar typical people, and that God's relations to Israel were meant to be a type of His relations to His believing people all over the world.

I do not forget that it is written, "As face answereth to face, so does the heart of man to man" (Prov. xxvii. 19), and that whatever spiritual truths are taught in prophecy concerning Israelitish hearts, are applicable to the hearts of Gentiles.

I would have it most distinctly understood that God's dealings with individual Jews and Gentiles are precisely one and the same. Without repentance, faith in Christ, and holiness of heart, no individual Jew or Gentile shall ever be saved.

What I protest against is, the habit of allegorizing plain sayings of the Word of God concerning the future history of the *nation* Israel, and explaining away the fulness of their contents in order to accommodate them to the Gentile Church. I believe the habit to be unwarranted by anything in Scripture, and to draw after it a long train of evil consequences.

Where, I would venture to ask, in the whole New Testament, shall we find any plain authority for applying the word "Israel" to any but the *nation* Israel? I can find none. On the contrary, I observe that when the Apostle Paul quotes Old Testament prophecies

about the privileges of the Gentiles in Gospel times, he is careful to quote texts which specially mention the "Gentiles" by name. The fifteenth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans is a striking illustration of what I mean. We are often told in the New Testament that, under the Gospel, believing Gentiles are "fellow-heirs and partakers of the same hope" with believing Jews. (Ephes. iii. 6.) But that believing Gentiles may be called "Israelites," I cannot see anywhere at all.

To what may we attribute that loose system of interpreting the language of the Psalms and Prophets, and the extravagant expectations of universal conversion of the world by the preaching of the Gospel, which may be observed in many Christian writers? To nothing so much, I believe, as to the habit of inaccurately interpreting the word "Israel," and the consequent application of promises to the Gentile Churches, with which they have nothing to do. The least errors in theology always bear fruit. Never does man take up an incorrect principle of interpreting Scripture without that principle entailing awkward consequences, and colouring the whole tone of his religion.

Reader, I leave this part of my subject here. I am sure that its importance cannot be overrated. In fact, a right understanding of it lies at the very root of the whole Jewish subject, and of the prophecies concerning the Jews. The duty which Christians owe to Israel as a nation will never be clearly understood until Christians clearly see the place that Israel occupies in Scripture.

Before going any further, I will ask all readers of this book one plain practical question. I ask you to

consider calmly what sense you put on such words as "Israel," "Jacob," and the like, when you meet with them in the Psalms and prophecies of the Old Testament. We live in a day when there are many readers of the Bible. There are many who search the Scriptures regularly, and read through the Psalms and the Prophets once, if not twice or thrice, every year they live. Of course you attach some meaning to the words I have just referred to. You place some sense upon them. Now what is that sense? What is that meaning? Take heed that it is the right one.

Reader, accept a friendly exhortation this day. Cleave to the literal sense of Bible words, and beware of departing from it, except in cases of absolute necessity. Beware of that system of allegorizing, and spiritualizing, and accommodating, which the school of Origen first brought in, and which has found such an unfortunate degree of favour in the Church. In reading the authorized version of the English Bible, do not put too much confidence in the "headings" of pages and "tables of contents" at beginnings of chapters, which I take leave to consider a most unhappy accompaniment of that admirable translation. Remember that those headings and tables of contents were drawn up by uninspired hands. In reading the Prophets, they are sometimes not helps, but real hindrances, and less likely to assist a reader than to lead him astray. Settle it in your mind, in reading the Psalms and Prophets, that Israel means Israel, and Zion means Zion, and Jerusalem means Jerusalem. And, finally, whatever edification you derive from applying to your own soul the words

which God addresses to His ancient people, never lose sight of the primary sense of the text.

II. The second point in the text on which I proposed to dwell, is *the present condition of Israel*.

The expression used by Jeremiah describes exactly the state in which the Jews are at this day, and have been for nearly eighteen hundred years. They are a "scattered" people. The armies of Assyria, Babylon, and Rome, have, one after another, swept over the land of Israel, and carried its inhabitants into captivity. Few, if any, of the ten tribes appear to have returned from the Assyrian captivity. Not fifty thousand of Judah and Benjamin came back from the captivity of Babylon. From the last and worst captivity, when the temple was burned, and Jerusalem destroyed, there has been no return at all. For eighteen hundred years Israel has been dispersed over the four quarters of the globe. Like the wreck of some goodly ship, the Jews have been tossed to and fro on all waters, and stranded in broken pieces on every shore.

But though Israel has been "scattered," Israel has not been destroyed. For eighteen hundred years the Jews have continued a separate people, without a king, without a land, without a territory, but never lost, never absorbed among other nations.—They have been often trampled under foot, but never shaken from the faith of their fathers. They have often been persecuted, but never destroyed. At this very moment they are as distinct and peculiar a people as any people upon earth, an unanswerable argument in the way of the infidel, a

puzzling difficulty in the way of politicians, a standing lesson to all the world. Danes, Saxons, Normans, Belgians, French, Germans, have all in turn settled on English soil. All have in turn lost their national distinctiveness. All have in turn become part and parcel of the English nation after the lapse of a few hundred years. But it has never been so with the Jews. Dispersed as they are, there is a principle of cohesion among them which no circumstances have been able to melt. Scattered as they are, there is a national vitality among them which is stronger than that of any nation on earth. Go where you will, you always find them. Settle where you please, in hot countries or in cold, you will find the Jews. But go where you will, and settle where you please, this wonderful people is always the same. Scattered as they are, few in number compared to those among whom they live, the Jews are always the Jews. Three thousand years ago Balaam said, "The people shall dwell alone, and not be reckoned among the nations." Eighteen hundred years ago our Lord said, "This generation shall not pass away till all be fulfilled." We see these words made good before our eyes. (Num. xxiii. 9; Luke xxi. 32.)

But by whose hand was this scattering of Israel wrought? The text before us to-day declares expressly that it was the hand of God. It was not the armies of Tiglath-Pileser or Shalmanezzer, of Nebuchadnezzar or of Titus. They were only instruments in the hand of a far higher power. It was that God who ordereth all things in heaven and earth, who dispersed the twelve tribes over the face of the earth. It was the same God

who brought Israel out of Egypt with a high hand and mighty arm, and planted them in Canaan, who plucked them up by the roots, and made them "wanderers among the nations." (Hosea ix. 17.)

And why did God send this heavy judgment upon Israel? To what are we to attribute this marvellous dispersion of a people so highly favoured? The inquiry is a very useful one. Let us mark well the answer.

The Jews are a "scattered" people because of their many sins. Their hardness and stiffneckedness, their impenitence and unbelief, their abuse of privileges and neglect of gifts, their rejection of prophets and messengers from heaven, and finally their refusal to receive the Lord Jesus Christ, the King's own Son,—these were the things which called down God's wrath upon them. These were the causes of their present dispersion. The vine which was brought out of Egypt bore wild grapes. The husbandmen to whom the vineyard was let out rendered not of the fruit to the Lord of the vineyard. The people that were brought out of the house of bondage rebelled against Him by whom they were set free. Hence the wrath of God rose until there was no remedy. Thus He says, "You only have I known among the inhabitants of the earth, therefore I will punish you, because of your iniquities." (Amos iii. 2.) "They killed the Lord Jesus and their own prophets: they persecuted the apostles: they pleased not God: they were enemies to all men: they forbade us to speak to the Gentiles; and, therefore, the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost." (1 Thess. ii. 15.)

Israel was "scattered" to be a perpetual warning to

the Gentile Churches of Christ. The Jews are God's beacon or pillar of salt to all Christendom, and a silent standing lesson which all who profess to know God ought never to forget. They proclaim to all Christians God's hatred of spiritual pride and self-righteousness,—God's high displeasure with those who exalt the traditions of men, and depart from the Scripture,—God's hatred of formality and ceremonialism. If any man desires to know how much God hates these things, he has only to look at the present condition of the Jews. For eighteen hundred years God has held them up before the eyes of the world, and written His abhorrence of their sins in letters which he who runs may read.

Reader, I cannot pass away from this part of my subject without entreating all who read this book to learn a practical lesson from the scattering of Israel. I entreat you to remember the causes which led to their dispersion, and to beware of the slightest approach to their peculiar sins. I am sure the warning is needed in these latter days. I am sure that the opinions which are boldly broached and openly maintained by many religious teachers in all Churches of Christendom, call loudly on all Christians to stand upon their guard. It is not without good reason that our Lord said, "Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Sadducees and Pharisees." (Matt. xvi. 6.) Look to your own heart. Beware of tampering with false doctrines. Churches are never safe unless their members know their individual responsibility. Let us each look to ourselves, and take heed to our own souls. The same God lives who scattered Israel because of Israel's sins. And what says

He to the Churches of Christ this day? He says, "Be not high-minded, but fear. If God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest He also spare not thee." (Rom. xi. 20, 21.)

III. The third part in the text on which I propose to dwell is, *the future prospects of Israel*.

In taking up this branch of my subject, I feel that I am entering on the region of unfulfilled prophecy. I desire to do so with reverence, and with a deep sense of the many difficulties surrounding this department of theology, and the many diversities of opinion which prevail upon it. But the servant of God must "call no man master" on earth. Truth is never likely to be attained, unless all ministers of Christ speak out their opinions fully, freely, and unreservedly, and give men an opportunity of weighing what they teach.

Reader, however great the difficulties surrounding many parts of unfulfilled prophecy, two points appear to my own mind to stand out as plainly as if written by a sunbeam. One of these points is the second personal advent of our Lord Jesus Christ before the Millennium.—The other of these points is the future literal gathering of the Jewish nation, and their restoration to their own land.—I tell no man that these two truths are essential to salvation, and that he cannot be saved except he sees them with my eyes. But I tell any man that these truths appear to me distinctly set down in holy Scripture, and that the denial of them is as astonishing and incomprehensible to my own mind as the denial of the divinity of Christ.

Now what says our text about the future prospects of the Jews? It says, "He that scattered Israel will gather him." That gathering is an event which plainly is yet to come. It could not apply in any sense to the ten tribes of Israel. They have never been "gathered" in any way. Their "scattering" has never come to an end.—It cannot be applied to a return of the remnant of Judah and Benjamin from the Babylonish captivity. The language of the text makes such an application impossible. The text is addressed to the Gentiles, "the nations." The declaration they are commanded to make is, "to the isles of the sea." In the days of the Babylonish captivity, the nations of the earth knew nothing of the Word of the Lord. They were sunk in darkness, and had not even heard the Lord's name. If Jeremiah had told them to proclaim the return of the Jews from Babylon under such circumstances it would have been useless and absurd. There is but one fair and legitimate interpretation of the promise of the text. The event it declares is yet future. The "gathering" spoken of is a gathering which is yet to come.

Reader, I believe that the interpretation I have just given is in entire harmony with many other plain prophecies of Scripture. Time would fail me if I were to quote a tenth part of the texts which teach the same truth. Out of the sixteen prophets of the Old Testament, there are at least ten in which the gathering and restoration of the Jews in the latter days are expressly mentioned. From each of these ten I will take one testimony. I say "one" testimony deliberately. I am anxious not to overload the subject with evidence.

I would only remind the reader that the texts I am about to quote are only a small portion of the evidence that might be brought forward.

(1.) Hear what *Isaiah* says: *Isaiah* xi. 11, 12. "It shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And He shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth."

(2.) Hear what *Ezekiel* says: *Ezek.* xxxvii. 21. "Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land."

(3.) Hear what *Hosea* says: *Hosea* i. 11; iii. 4, 5. "Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land: for great shall be the day of Jezreel." "For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim: afterwards shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and His goodness in the latter days."

(4.) Hear what *Joel* says: *Joel* iii. 20. "But

Judah shall dwell for ever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation."

(5.) Hear what *Amos* says: Amos ix. 14, 15. "And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land, which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God."

(6.) Hear what *Obadiah* says: Obadiah i. 17. "But upon Mount Zion shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness: and the house of Jacob shall possess their possession."

(7.) Hear what *Micah* says: Micah iv. 6, 7. "In that day, saith the Lord, will I assemble her that halteth, and I will gather her that is driven out, and her that I have afflicted: and I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was cast far off a strong nation: and the Lord shall reign over them in Mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever."

(8.) Hear what *Zephaniah* says: Zeph. iii. 14—20. "Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. The Lord hath taken away thy judgments, He hath cast out thine enemy; the king of Israel, even the Lord, is in the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil any more. In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not: and to Zion, let not thine hands be slack. The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; He will

save, He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing. I will gather them that are sorrowful for the solemn assembly, who are of thee, to whom the reproach of it was a burden. Behold, at that time I will undo all that afflict thee: and I will save her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out; and I will get them praise and fame in every land where they have been put to shame. At that time I will bring you again, even in the time that I gather you: for I will make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth, when I turn back your captivity before your eyes, saith the Lord."

(9.) Hear what *Zechariah* says: Zech. x. 6—10. "And I will strengthen the house of Judah, and I will save the house of Joseph, and I will bring them again to place them; for I have mercy upon them: and they shall be as though I had not cast them off: for I am the Lord their God, and will hear them. And they of Ephraim shall be like a mighty man, and their heart shall rejoice as through wine: yea, their children shall see it and be glad; their heart shall rejoice in the Lord. I will hiss for them, and gather them; for I have redeemed them: and they shall increase as they have increased. And I will sow them among the people: and they shall remember me in far countries; and they shall live with their children, and turn again. I will bring them again also out of the land of Egypt, and gather them out of Assyria; and I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon; and place shall not be found for them."

(10.) Hear, lastly, what *Jeremiah* says : Jer. xxx. 3 and 11. "For, lo, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the Lord : and I will cause them to return to the land which I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it." "For I am with thee, saith the Lord, to save thee : though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee ; but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished."

Reader, I place these texts before you without note or comment. I only ask that they may be weighed and examined, and the several chapters from which they are taken read carefully. I believe there is one common remark that applies to them all. They all point to a time which is yet future. They all predict the final gathering of the Jewish nation from the four quarters of the globe, and their restoration to their own land.

I request you to believe that the subject admits of being drawn out at far greater length than the limits of these pages allow. I am resolved, however, not to encumber it by entering on topics of comparatively subordinate importance. I will not complicate it by dwelling on the *manner* in which Israel shall be gathered, and the particular events which shall accompany the gathering. I might show you by Scriptural evidence that the Jews will probably first be gathered in an unconverted state, though humbled ; and will afterwards be taught to look to Him whom they have pierced, through much tribulation. I might speak of the future glory of Jerusalem after the Jews are restored, and the last siege which it

shall endure, as described by Zechariah and by our Lord Jesus Christ. But I forbear. I will not travel beyond the bounds of my text. I think it better to present its weighty promise to you in its naked simplicity. "Israel scattered shall yet be gathered." This is the future prospect of the Jew.

Now is there anything *contrary to this gathering in the New Testament*? I cannot find a single word. So far from this being the case, I find a chapter in the Epistle to the Romans where the subject is fully discussed. An inspired Apostle speaks there of Israel being once more "received" into God's favour, "grafted in," and "saved." (See Rom. xi. 15—32.)

Is there anything *impossible* in this gathering of Israel? Who talks of impossibilities? If an infidel, let him explain the present condition and past history of Israel, if he can;—and when he has solved that mighty problem, we may listen to him. If a Christian, let him think again before he talks of anything being impossible with God. Let him read the vision of the dry bones in Ezekiel, and mark to whom that vision applies. Let him look to his own conversion and resurrection from the death of trespasses and sins, and recall the unworthy thought that anything is too hard for the Lord.

Is there anything *inconsistent with God's former dealings* in the gathering of Israel? Is there any extravagance in expecting such an event? Why should we say so? Reasoning from analogy, I can see no ground for refusing to believe that God may yet do wonderful things for the Jewish people. It would not be more marvellous to see them gathered once more into Pales-

tine, than it was to see them brought from Egypt into the promised land. What God has done once, He may surely do again.

Is there anything *improbable* in the gathering of Israel? Alas! reader, we are poor judges of probabilities. God's ways of carrying into effect His own purposes are not to be judged by man's standard, or measured by the line and plummet of what man calls "probable." In the day when the children of Israel went forth from Egypt, would any one have said it was *probable* that such a nation of serfs would ever produce a book that should turn the world upside down? Yet that nation has done it. From that nation has come the Bible.—Four thousand years ago, would any one have said it was *probable* that God's Son would come to earth, and suffer in the flesh on a cross, before He came to earth in glory to reign? Yet so it has been. Christ has lived, and Christ has suffered, and Christ has died. Away with this talk about improbabilities! The ways of God are not our ways.

Finally, is there anything *fanatical or enthusiastic* in this expectation that Israel shall be gathered? Why should men say so? Your own eyes tell you that the present order of things will never convert the world. There is not a church, or a parish, or a congregation, where the converted are more than a little flock. There is not a faithful minister on earth, and never has been, who has ever seen more than the "taking out of a people" to serve Christ. A change must come before the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord. A new order of teachers must be raised up, and a new

dispensation ushered in. These teachers, I firmly believe, shall be converted Jews. And then shall be seen the fulfilment of the remarkable words, "If the casting of them away be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?" (Rom. xi. 15.)

I may not dwell longer on this branch of my subject. I leave it with one general remark, which may sound to some readers like a bald truism. Whether it be a truism or not, I believe the remark to be of vital importance, and I heartily wish that it was more deeply impressed on all our minds.

I ask you, then, to settle it firmly in your mind, that when God says a thing shall be done, we ought to believe it. We have no right to begin talking of probable or improbable—likely or unlikely—possible or impossible—reasonable or unreasonable. What is all this but veiled scepticism, and infidelity in disguise? What hath the Lord said? and what hath the Lord spoken? What saith the Scripture? What is written in the Word? These are the only questions we have a right to ask; and when the answer to them is plain, we have nothing to do but to believe. Our reason may rebel. Our preconceived ideas of what God ought to do may receive a rude shock. Our private systems of prophetic interpretation may be shattered to pieces. Our secret prejudices may be grievously offended. But what are we to do? We must abide by Scripture; or be of all men most miserable. At any cost let us cling to the Word. "Let God be true, and every man a liar."

In all matters of unfulfilled prophecy, I desire, for

my own part, to fall back on this principle. I see many things I cannot explain. I find many difficulties I cannot solve. But I dare not give up my principle. I am determined to believe everything that God says. I know it will all prove true at the last day. I read that He says in the text before us this day, "He that scattered Israel shall gather him." It must be true, I feel, whatever be the difficulties. That Israel shall be gathered I steadfastly believe.

IV. The last point on which I propose to dwell is one purely practical. It is *the duty which Gentile Churches owe to Israel*.

Reader, in touching on this point, I would not have you for a moment suppose that the future gathering of Israel depends on anything that man can do. God's counsels and purposes are independent of human strength. The sun will set to-night at its appointed hour, and neither Queen, Lords nor Commons,—Pope, Presidents, nor Emperors, — can hasten, prevent, or put off its setting.—The tides of the sea will ebb and flow this week in their regular course, and no scientific decree nor engineering skill can interfere with their motion. And just in like manner the promises of God concerning Israel will all be fulfilled in due season, whether we will hear or whether we will forbear. When the "times and seasons" arrive which God has "put in His own power," Israel will be gathered;—and all the alliances and combinations of statesmen, and and all the persecution and unbelief of apostate churches, shall not be able to prevent it.

But seeing that we look for such things, it becomes us all to be found in the path of duty. It behoves us to consider gravely the solemn question, What manner of persons ought we to be? and in what way can we testify our full assent to God's purposes about the Jews? Can we in no sense be fellow-workers with God? Should we not remember that remarkable saying of St. Paul,—“Through your mercy they shall obtain mercy.” (Rom. xi. 31.) This is the question to which I now desire briefly to supply a practical answer.

(1.) I believe, then, for one thing, that it is a duty incumbent on all Gentile Christians *to take a special interest* in the spiritual condition of the Jewish nation, and to give their conversion a special place in our prayers. I say, advisedly, their spiritual condition. I leave alone their civil and political position. I speak, exclusively, of our duty to Jewish souls. I say that we owe them a special debt, and that this debt ought to be carefully paid.

We prize our Bibles, and we are right to do so. A heaven without a sun would not be more blank than a world without a Bible. But do we ever reflect that every page in that blessed book was written under God's inspiration by Israelitish hands? Remember that every chapter and verse you read in your Bible you owe, under God, to Israel. There is not a religious society that meets in London in the month of May which is not constantly working with Israelitish tools.

We prize the glorious Gospel of the grace of God,

and we are right to do so. A land without the Gospel, like Oude and China, is nothing better than a moral wilderness. See the vast difference between Europe and America with the Gospel, notwithstanding all their vices, and Africa and Asia without it. But do we ever reflect that the first preachers of that Gospel were all Jews? The men who, at cost of their lives, first carried from town to town the blessed tidings of Christ crucified, were not Gentiles. The first to take up the lamp of truth, which was passed from hand to hand, till it reached our heathen forefathers, were all men of Israel.

We rejoice in Christ Jesus, and glory in His person and work. Well may we do so! Without a living Saviour, and the blood of His atonement once made on the cross, we should indeed be miserable. But do we ever reflect that when that Saviour became a man, in order that, as man's substitute, He might suffer and die, He was born of a Jewish woman? Yes! let that never be forgotten. When "God was manifest in the flesh," and was born of a woman, that woman was a virgin of the house of David. When the promised Saviour took flesh and blood that He might bruise the serpent's head and redeem man, He took not flesh and blood of any royal house among the Gentiles, but of one of the twelve tribes of Israel.

Reader, I know well that these are ancient things. They have been often urged, often alleged, often pressed on the attention of the Churches. I am not ashamed to bring them forward again. I say, that if there be such a thing as gratitude in the heart of man, it is the

duty of all Gentile Christians to take special interest in the work of doing good to the Jews.

(2.) I believe, furthermore, that it is a duty incumbent on all Gentile Christians to be specially careful that they *take up stumbling blocks out of the way of Israel*, and to see that they do nothing to disgust them with Christianity, or hinder their conversion. This is a matter which is expressly mentioned in Scripture. There we find Isaiah bidding us, "Take up the stumbling blocks out of the way of God's people." (Isaiah lvii. 14.) Truly the prophet might well speak of this. No man can look round the Gentile Churches and fail to see that he had cause.

What shall we say of the glaring unholiness and neglect of God's Ten Commandments which prevail so widely in Christendom?—What shall we say of the open unblushing idolatry which offends the eye in all Roman Catholic Churches?—What shall we say of the wide-spread habit of Sabbath breaking which is eating like a cancer into the heart of the Protestant Churches?—What shall we say of the rationalistic mode of interpreting Old Testament history, which has crept so extensively into modern commentaries, —the system of regarding the histories of Abraham, and Jacob, and Joseph, and the like, as so many myths, or ingenious fables, but not as narratives of facts which really took place?—What shall we say of the traditional mode of interpreting Old Testament prophecies, in which so many Christians indulge,—the system of appropriating all the blessings to the Church of Christ,

and handing over all the bitter things to poor despised Israel,—the system of interpreting all prophecies about Christ's first advent literally, and all prophecies about His second advent figuratively, requiring the Jew to believe the first in the letter, and refusing in turn to believe the second, except in what is called, by a sad misnomer, a *spiritual* sense?—What shall we say of all these things, but that they are stumbling blocks,—great stumbling blocks,—in the way of the conversion of the Jews? What are they all but great barriers between the Jew and Christ, and barriers cast up by Christian hands?

Reader, we must all do our part in aiding to take these stumbling blocks away. Here at least all may help. Here, at any rate, every Gentile Christian can aid the Jewish cause. The more pure and lovely we can make our holy faith, the more we are likely to recommend it to Israel. The more we can check the progress of the Roman apostacy, and protest against its idolatries and corruptions, the more likely is the Jew to believe there is something in Christianity. The more we can promote the habit of taking all Scripture in its plain literal sense, the more we are likely to remove prejudices in the minds of honest inquirers in Israel, and to make them ready to hear what we have to say.

(3.) Finally, I believe it is a duty incumbent on all Gentile Christians, to *use special efforts in order to promote the conversion of the Jews*. I say special efforts advisedly. The Jews are a peculiar people, and must be approached in a peculiar way.

They are peculiar in their state of mind. They require an entirely different treatment from the heathen. Their objections are not the heathen man's objections. Their difficulties are not the heathen man's difficulties. They believe many things which the heathen man never heard of. They have a standard of right and wrong with which the heathen man is utterly unacquainted. Like the heathen they need to be converted. Like the heathen they need to be brought to Christ. But the lines of argument to be pursued with the Jew and the heathen are widely dissimilar. A faithful missionary might do admirably well among the heathen, who might find it difficult to reason with a Jew.

They are peculiar in their position in the world. They are not to be found all assembled together, like the Africans at Sierra Leone, or the Hindoos, or New Zealanders, or Chinese. They are emphatically a scattered people, a few in one country, and a few in another. An effort to get at them, must aim at nothing short of sending missionaries in search of them all over the world.

Circumstances like these appear to me to point out clearly that nothing less than a special effort will ever enable Christians to discharge their debt to Israel. There must be a division of labour in the missionary field. There must be a special concentration of preaching, praying, and loving intercourse on the Jewish people, or the Churches of the Gentiles can never expect to do them much spiritual good. Without such special effort the cause of Israel will inevitably be lost sight of in the cause of the whole heathen world.

Without such *special* effort I cannot see how the command of the text can be rightly obeyed.

Now here lies the claim which the Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews makes on English Christians in the present day for aid. It enables them to make a special effort on behalf of Israel. It supplies them with an outgate for their sympathy, and a faithful instrumentality for sending the Gospel to God's ancient people. It is in this light that I earnestly commend the Society to the support of all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and desire to do good in the world.

I am quite aware that it is a common remark, that the Society does nothing. Its results appear to some small and insignificant. I think, however, that those who make such an objection, have probably never considered the very peculiar character of the work which the Society does. Its field is necessarily a singularly scattered one. Its agents are necessarily scattered widely apart one from another. The work that they do, in the very nature of things, makes far less show than the work of a united band of missionaries at Tinnevelley or Sierra Leone. Tried, I believe, by any fair standard, the work of the Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews has no cause to fear inspection. Its agents are bearing a testimony in some places, and awakening in Israel thought, reflection, and inquiry. In others they are gradually softening prejudices, and inclining Jews to hold discussions or listen to Gospel statements. In others they are calling out a people, and leading them to the foot of the cross.

What more do we see going on at home? What greater results than these can be found in any congregation on earth where the Gospel is preached? And, after all, duties are ours, and results are God's.

I leave the whole subject with three remarks, which I pray God to impress on the minds of all into whose hands this book may fall.

For one thing, I charge every reader of this book to remember the special blessing which God has promised to all who care for Israel. Whatever a sneering world may say, the Jews are a people beloved for their fathers' sake. Of Jerusalem it is written, "They shall prosper that love thee." Psalm cxxii. 6. Of Israel it is written, "Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee." Num. xxiv. 9. These promises are not yet exhausted. We see their fulfilment in the blessing granted to the Church of England since the day when the Jewish cause was first taken up. We see their fulfilment in the peculiar honour which God has put from time to time on individual Christians who have laboured especially for the Jewish cause. Charles Simeon, Edward Bickersteth, Robert M'Cheyne, and Haldane Stewart, are striking examples of what I mean. Is there any one that desires God's special blessing? Then let him labour in the cause of Israel, and he shall not fail to find it.

For another thing, I charge every reader of this book never to forget the close connection which Scripture reveals between the time of Israel's gathering and the time of Christ's second advent to the world. In one Psalm it is expressly declared, "When the Lord

shall build up Zion, He shall appear in His glory." Psalm cii. 16. Where is the true believer that does not long for that blessed day? Where is the true Christian that does not cry from the bottom of his heart, "Thy kingdom come?" Let all such work, and give, and pray, so that the Gospel may have free course in Israel, and be glorified. The time to favour Zion is closely bound up with the restitution of all things. Blessed, indeed, is that work of which the completion shall usher in the second coming of the Lord!

Finally, I charge every reader of this book to make sure work of his own salvation. Rest not in mere head-knowledge of prophetic subjects. Be not content with intellectual soundness in the faith. Give diligence to make your own calling and election sure. Seek to know that your repentance and faith are genuine and true. Seek to feel that you are one with Christ and Christ in you; and that you are washed, sanctified, and justified. Then, whether the completion of God's promises to Israel be near or far off, your own portion will be sure. You will stand in your lot safely, when the kingdoms of this world are passing away. You will meet Christ without fear when He comes the second time to Zion. You will join boldly in the song, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." You will sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God, and go out no more.

Able to Save.*

HEBREWS VII. 25.

"He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing that he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

READER,

There is one subject in religion, about which you can never know too much. That subject is Jesus Christ the Lord. This is the mighty subject which the text that heads this page unfolds,—Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ's intercession.

I have heard of a book entitled "The Story without an End." I know no story deserving that title so well as the everlasting Gospel. This is indeed and in truth the story without an end. There is an infinite "fulness" in Christ. There are in Him "unsearchable riches."

* Originally preached as a Sermon at St. Thomas's Church, Dublin, on behalf of the Irish Church Missions, in April, 1869. It has been prepared by the Author for publication in its present form from the reporter's notes.

There is in Him a "love which passeth knowledge." He is an "unspeakable gift." (Coloss. i. 19 : Ephes. iii. 8; iii. 19 : 2 Cor. x. 15.) There is no end to all the riches that are treasured up in Him, in His person, in His work, in His offices, in His words, in His deeds, in His life, in His death, in His resurrection. I take but one branch of the great subject this day. I am going to speak to you about the intercession and priestly office of our Lord Jesus Christ. May God the Holy Ghost bless the consideration of this subject! May He, without whom ministers preach and write in vain, apply the subject with power to your soul! If His blessing goes with this book, good will be done. If His blessing goes not with it, the words that I write will fall to the ground.

There are three points which I propose to consider, in opening the text which heads these pages.

I.—You have here a description of all true Christians—They are a people who come to God by Christ.

II.—You have the work that Jesus Christ is ever carrying on on behalf of true Christians—He ever lives to make intercession for them.

III.—You have the comfortable conclusion built by St. Paul upon Christ's work of intercession. He says : —"He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him, because He ever liveth to make intercession for them."

I.—You have first *a description of all true Christians*. It is most simple, most beautiful, and most true. Great is the contrast between the description given by the Holy Ghost of a Christian, and the description which is given by man. With man it is often enough to say that such a one “is a Churchman,” or that such a one “belongs to this body of Christians or to that.” It is not so when the Holy Ghost draws the picture. The Holy Ghost describes a Christian as a man “who comes unto God by Christ.”

True Christians come unto God. They are not as many who turn their backs upon Him;—who “go into a far country,” like the prodigal son;—who “go out” like Cain “from the presence of the Lord;”—who are “alienated, strangers and enemies in their mind by wicked works.” (Coloss. i. 21.) They are reconciled to God and friends of God.—They are not as many who dislike everything that belongs to God, His word, His day, His ordinances, His people, His house. They love all that belongs to their master. The very footprints of His steps are dear unto them. His name is as ointment poured forth.—They are not as many who are content with coming to church, or with coming to chapel, or with coming to the Lord’s table. They go further than that. They “come unto God,” and in communion with God they live.

But more than this, true Christians come unto God in a certain peculiar way. They come unto God by Christ, pleading no other plea, mentioning no other name, trusting in no other righteousness, resting on no other foundation than this, that Jesus hath lived,

Jesus hath died, Jesus hath risen again for their souls.

“I the chief of sinners am,
But Jesus died for me.”

This is the way by which the true Christian draws near to God.

Reader, the way of which I have been speaking is an *old* way. It is well nigh 6,000 years old. All that have ever been saved have drawn near to God by this way. From Abel, the first saint that entered Paradise, down to the last infant that died this morning, they have all come to God only by Jesus Christ. “No man cometh unto the Father but by Christ.” (John xiv. 6.)

It is a *good* way. It is easy for the worldly-wise to sneer at and ridicule it. But all the wit and wisdom of man has never devised a way more perfect, more complete, and that will bear more thoroughly all fair and reasonable investigation. It has been to the Jew a stumbling-block; it has been to the Greek foolishness. But all who have known their hearts, and understand what God demands, have found the way made by Jesus Christ a good way, and a way that stands the fullest examination that can be made as to its wisdom. Therein they find justice and mercy met together;—righteousness and peace kissing one another;—God a holy God, yet loving, kind, and merciful;—man knowing himself a poor, weak, sinner, yet drawing near to God with boldness, having access with confidence, looking up into his face without fear, seeing him in Christ his Father and his Friend.

Not least, it is a *tried* way. Thousands and tens of thousands have walked in it, and not one of all that number has ever missed heaven.—Apostles, prophets, patriarchs, martyrs, early fathers, reformers, puritans, men of God in every age, and of every people and tongue;—holy men of our own day—men like Simeon, Bickersteth, Havelock—have all walked in this way. They have had their battles to fight, and their enemies to contend with. They have had to carry the cross. They have found lions in their path. They have had to walk through the valley of the shadow of death. They have had to contend with Apolyon. They have had to cross at last the cold dark river. But they have walked safely through to the other side, and entered with joy into the celestial city. And now they are all waiting for you and me to walk in their steps, to follow them, and to share in their glory.

Reader, this is the way I want you to walk in. I want you to come unto God by Jesus Christ. Let there be no mistake as to the object which true ministers of the Gospel have in view. We are not set apart merely to perform a certain round of ordinances; to read prayers, to christen those that are christened, to bury those that are buried, to marry those that are married. We are set apart for the grand purpose of proclaiming the one true living way, and inviting you to walk in it. We ought to labour day and night, until we can persuade you, by God's blessing, to walk in that way—the tried way, the good way, the old way—and to know the peace which passeth all understanding, which in that way alone is to be found.

II.—I pass on now to the second point which I purpose to consider. The text which heads these pages, speaks of the *work which the Lord Jesus Christ is ever doing on behalf of true Christians*. I ask your special attention to this point. It is one of deep importance to our peace, and to the establishment of our souls in the Christian faith.

There is one great work which the Lord Jesus Christ has done and finished completely. That work is the work of atonement, sacrifice, and substitution. It is the work which He did when He suffered for sin, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us unto God. He saw us ruined by the fall, a world of poor, lost, shipwrecked sinners. He saw and He pitied us; and in compliance with the everlasting counsels of the Eternal Trinity, He came down to the world, to suffer in our stead, and to save us. He did not sit in heaven pitying us from a distance. He did not stand upon the shore and see the wreck, and behold poor drowning sinners struggling in vain to get to shore. He plunged into the waters Himself. He came off to the wreck, and took part with us in our weakness and infirmity, becoming a man to save our souls. As man, He bore our sins and carried our transgressions. As man, He endured all that men can endure, and went through everything in man's experience, sin only excepted. As man He lived. As man He went to the cross. As man He died. As man He shed His blood, in order that He might save us, poor shipwrecked sinners! and establish a communication between earth and heaven. As man, He became a curse for us, in order that He might bridge

the gulf, and make a way by which you and I might draw near to God with boldness, and have access to God without fear. In all this work of Christ, remember, there was infinite merit, because He who did it was not only man but God. Let that never be forgotten. He who wrought out our redemption was perfect man; but He never ceased for a moment to be perfect God.

But there is another great work which the Lord Jesus Christ is yet doing. That work is the work of intercession.—The first work He did once for all. Nothing can be added to it; nothing can be taken away from it. It was a finished, perfect work, when Christ offered up the sacrifice upon the cross. No other sacrifice need be offered, beside the sacrifice once made by the Lamb of God, when He shed His own blood at Calvary. But the second work He is ever carrying on at the right hand of God, where He makes intercession for His people.—The first work He did on earth when He died upon the cross. The second work He carries on in heaven, at the right hand of God the Father.—The first work He did for all mankind, and offers the benefit of it to all the world. The second work He carries on and accomplishes solely and entirely on behalf of His own elect, His people, His servants, and His children.

Reader, How does our Lord Jesus Christ carry on this work? How shall we comprehend and grasp what is the meaning of Christ's intercession? We must not pry rashly into things unseen. We must not "rush in where angels fear to tread." Yet some idea we can obtain of the nature of that continual intercession

which Christ ever lives to make on behalf of His believing people.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is doing for His people the work which the Jewish high-priest of old did on behalf of the Israelites. He is acting as the manager, the representative, the mediator in all things between His people and God.—He is ever presenting on their behalf His own perfect sacrifice, and His all-sufficient merit, before God the Father.—He is ever obtaining daily supplies of fresh mercy and of fresh grace for His poor, weak servants, who need daily mercy for daily sins, and daily grace for daily necessities.—He ever prays for them. As He prayed for Simon Peter upon earth, so I believe He prays for His people now.—He presents their names before God the Father. He carries their names upon His heart, the place of love, and upon His shoulders, the place of power, — as the high-priest carried the names of all the tribes of Israel, from the least to the greatest, when he wore his robes of office. He presents their prayers before God. They go up before God the Father mingled with Christ's all-prevailing intercession, and so are acceptable in God's sight. He lives, in one word, to be the friend, the advocate, the priest, the all-prevailing agent, of all who are His members here upon earth. As their elder brother He acts for them, and all that their souls require, He, in the court of heaven, is ever carrying on.

Does any reader of this book need a friend? In such a world as this, how many hearts there are which ought to respond to that appeal. How many there are who feel "I stand alone." How many have found one idol

broken after another, one staff failing after another, one fountain dried after another, as they have travelled through the wilderness of this world. If there is one who wants a friend, let that one behold at the right hand of God an unfailing friend, the Lord Jesus Christ. Let that one repose his aching head and weary heart upon the bosom of that unfailing friend, Jesus Christ the Lord. There is one living at God's right hand of matchless tenderness. There is one who never dies. There is one who never fails, never disappoints, never forsakes, never changes His mind, never breaks off friendship. That One, the Lord Jesus, I commend to all who need a friend. No one in a world like this, a fallen world, a world which we find more and more barren, it may be, every year we live—no one ever need be friendless while the Lord Jesus Christ lives to intercede at the right hand of God.

Does any reader of this book need a priest? There can be no true religion without a priest, and no saving Christianity without a confessional. But who is the true priest? Where is the true confessional? There is only one true priest,—and that is Christ Jesus the Lord. There is only one real confessional,—and that is the throne of grace where the Lord Jesus waits to receive those who come to Him to unburden their hearts in His presence. We can find no better priest than Christ. We need no other priest. Why need we turn to any priest upon earth, while Jesus is sealed, anointed, appointed, ordained, and commissioned by God the Father, and has an ear ever ready to hear, and a heart ever ready to feel for the poor sinful sons of men? The

priesthood is His lawful prerogative. He has deputed that office to none. Woe be to any one upon earth who dares to rob Christ of His prerogative! Woe be to the man who takes upon himself the office which Christ holds in His own hands, and has never transferred to any one born of Adam upon the face of the globe!

Reader, I charge you solemnly, never to lose sight of this mighty truth of the Gospel—the intercession and priestly office of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. I believe that a firm grasp of this truth is one great safeguard against the errors of the Church of Rome. I believe that losing sight of this great truth is one principal reason why so many have fallen away from the faith in some quarters, have forsaken the creed of their Protestant forefathers, and have gone back to the darkness of Rome. Once firmly established upon this mighty truth—that we have a priest, an altar, and a confessor, that we have an unfailing, never-dying, ever living Intercessor, who has deputed His office to none,—and we shall see that we need turn aside nowhere else. We need not hew for ourselves broken cisterns that can hold no water, when we have in the Lord Jesus Christ a fountain of living water, ever flowing and free to all. We need not seek any human priest upon earth, when we have a divine Priest living for us in heaven.

Reader, beware of regarding the Lord Jesus Christ only as one that is dead. Here, I believe, many greatly err. They think much of His death, and it is right that they should do so. But we ought not to stop short there. We ought to remember that He not only died, and went to the grave, but that he rose again, and

ascended up on high, leading captivity captive. We ought to remember that He is now sitting on the right hand of God, to do a work as real, as true, as important to our souls, as the work which He did when he shed His blood. Christ lives, and is not dead. He lives as truly as any one of ourselves. Christ sees us, hears us, knows us, and is acting as a Priest in heaven on behalf of His believing people. The thought of His life ought to have as great and important a place in our souls, as the thought of His death upon the cross.

III.—I will now speak, in the third place, of *the comfortable conclusions that the Apostle builds upon the everlasting intercession of the Lord Jesus Christ*. We need much comfort and consolation in a world like this. It is no easy matter for a man to carry the cross and reach heaven. There are many enemies to be encountered and overcome. We have often to stand alone. We have at the best times few with us and many against us. We need cordials and strong consolation to sustain and cheer us, and to preserve us from fainting on the way as we travel from Egypt into Canaan. The Apostle appears deeply conscious of all this in the words he uses. He says—"He is able to save to the uttermost,"—to save perfectly, to save completely, to save eternally,—*"all that come unto God by Him, because He ever liveth to make intercession for them."*

Reader, I might say much on the glorious expression which is before you. But I forbear. I will only point out a few of the thoughts which ought to arise in our minds when we hear of Christ's ability to save to the

uttermost. I have not space to dwell on them at length. I rather throw them out as suggestions to supply matter for private meditation.

1. Think for one thing, that Christ is able to **save** to the uttermost, *notwithstanding the old sins* of any believer. Those old sins shall never rise again, nor stand up to condemn the child of God. For what says the Scripture,—“Christ hath not entered into the holy place made with hands, but into heaven itself, to appear in the presence of God for us.” (Heb. ix. 24.) Christ, to use a legal phrase, is ever making an appearance in the court of heaven on behalf of them that believe in Him. There is not a year, nor a month, nor a day, nor an hour, nor a minute, but there is One living in the presence of God, to make an appearance there on behalf of all the saints. Christ is ever appearing before God the Father on behalf of the men and women that believe in Him. His blood and His sacrifice are ever in God’s sight. His work, his death, his intercession, are always sounding in God the Father’s ears.

I remember reading a story in ancient history which may help to illustrate the truth on which I am now dwelling. It is the story of one who was put upon trial for a capital charge at Athens, shortly after the great battle of Marathon. In that famous battle the Athenians had preserved by their valour liberty for their little State, against the mighty hosts of the Persians; and among those who had distinguished themselves greatly, the brother of the prisoner was one, and had been sorely wounded in the fight. The man was

put upon his trial. The evidence against him was strong and unanswerable. There seemed no chance of the prisoner escaping condemnation. Suddenly there came forward one who asked to be heard on his behalf. And who was this? It was his own brother. When he was asked what evidence he had to give, or what reason he had to show why the prisoner at the bar ought not to be found guilty, he simply lifted up his mutilated arms—nothing but stumps—the hands completely cut off, the wounded stumps alone remaining. He was recognized as a man who at the battle of Marathon, had done prodigies of valour, and in the service of the State had lost his hands. By those wounds he had helped to win the victory which was then ringing in Athenian ears. Those wounds were the only evidence he brought forward. Those wounds were the only plea he advanced why his brother ought to be let go free, and sentence ought not to be passed upon him. And the story states that for the sake of those wounds—for the sake of all his brother had suffered, the prisoner was acquitted. The case was dismissed at once, and the prisoner obtained his liberty. Reader, in like manner the wounds of the Lord Jesus Christ are ever before God the Father. The nail-prints in His hands and feet—the marks of the spear in His side—the thorn-marks upon His forehead—the marks of all that He suffered as a Lamb slain, are ever before God the Father in heaven. While Christ is in heaven, the believer's sins will never rise in judgment against him. Think not with fear upon those old sins of yours, my believing brother or sister. Christ lives, and those

old sins will not condemn you. We have an ever-living, ever interceding Priest. Christ is not dead but alive.

2. Think again, that Christ is able to save to the uttermost, *notwithstanding all the present weakness* of His believing people. How great that weakness is, time would fail me to show. There are many of God's children who know their heart's bitterness, who bewail with strong crying and tears their short-comings, their unprofitableness, and the scanty fruit they bring forth. But oh! my beloved reader, take comfort in the words of St. John: "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father—ever present with the Father—" Jesus (Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins." (2 John ii. 1.) Those weaknesses may well humble thee. Those infirmities may well make thee walk softly before thy God. But while the Lord Jesus Christ lives, those infirmities need not make thee entirely despair. We have an ever-living, ever-interceding Priest. Christ is not dead but alive.

3. Think again, that Jesus Christ is able to save to the uttermost, *notwithstanding all the trials* that believers have to go through. Hear what the Apostle Paul says to Timothy: "I suffer. . . . nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." (1 Tim. i. 1.) So long as Jesus Christ lives, the believer in the Lord Jesus Christ may be assured that no affliction shall be allowed to break off the union between him and his risen Head. He may suffer greatly and be sorely tried. But while Christ lives he shall never be forsaken.

Neither poverty, nor sickness, nor bereavements, nor separations, shall ever separate Jesus and his believing people. We have an ever-living, ever-interceding Priest. Christ is not dead but alive.

4. Think again, that Christ is able to save to the uttermost, *notwithstanding all the persecutions* that believers have to go through. See what is said of St. Paul, when he met with much opposition at Corinth. We are told that the Lord stood by him in the night, and said, "Be not afraid, but speak and hold not thy peace; for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee, for I have much people in this city." (Acts xviii. 10.) Remember what He said to St. Paul at a former time, when He met him on the way to Damascus, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou *me*?" (Acts ix. 4.) Every injury done to the believer, is an injury done to the living Head in heaven. And every persecution showered down upon the head of the poor child of God here, is known, felt, and, I may add, with all reverence, resented, by our Great Elder Brother, who is ever living to make intercession for us. Christ lives, and therefore believers, though persecuted, shall not be destroyed. "In all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." (Rom. viii. 37.) We have an ever-living, ever interceding Priest. Christ is not dead but alive.

5. Think again, that Christ is able to save to the uttermost, *notwithstanding all the temptations of the devil*. Remember that famous passage in the Gospel of St. Luke, where our Lord, speaking to St. Peter, says, "Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to

have you, that he may sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not." (Luke xxii. 32.) Prayer like that is still carried on. Those words were spoken as an emblem of what the Lord is ever doing on behalf of His believing people. Satan, the prince of this world, is ever going about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. But Christ lives, and blessed be God, while Christ lives Satan shall not be able to overcome the soul that believes on Him. We have an ever-living, ever-interceding Priest. Christ is not dead but alive.

6. Think again, that Christ is able to save to the uttermost, *notwithstanding the sting of death*, and all that death brings with it. When David remembered that, he said, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." (Psalm xxiii. 4.) You and I may die, but Christ still lives. The hour may come when friends can do us no more good, when faithful servants can no longer minister to our wants, when all that love, and kindness, and affection can do to alleviate pain and make the last journey pleasant, can no longer render any service to us. But then the thought that Christ lives—Christ interceding, Christ caring for us, Christ at the right hand of God for us—ought to cheer us. The sting of death will be taken away from the man that leans upon a dying and also a living Saviour. Christ never dies. Through faith in that living Saviour we shall have a complete victory. We have an ever-living, ever-interceding Priest. Christ is not dead but alive.

7. Think again, that Christ is able to save to the uttermost, *notwithstanding the terrors of the judgment day*. Mark how St. Paul rests upon that in the 8th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, in that wonderful conclusion to that wonderful chapter—a chapter unrivalled in the Word of God for privilege, beginning with “no condemnation” and concluding with “no separation!” Observe how he dwells upon Christ’s intercession in connexion with the judgment of the last day. After saying, “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth,” he goes on—“Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.” The thought of Christ’s intercession, no less than His dying and rising again, was one ground of the Apostle Paul’s confidence in looking forward to the great day. His strong consolation was the recollection of a living Christ. That consolation is for us as well as for St. Paul. We have an ever-living, ever-interceding Priest. Christ is not dead but alive.

8. Think, lastly, and above all, that Christ is able to save to the uttermost *throughout all eternity*. “I am he,” He says, “that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore.” (Rev. i. 18.) The root of the believer never dies, and the branches, therefore, shall never die. Christ being “raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him.” (Rom. vi. 9.) He lives, that all who trust in Him may receive honour and glory to all eternity; and because He lives, His believing people shall never die. “Because

"I live," to use his own words, "ye shall live also." (John xiv. 19.) We have an ever-living, ever interceding Priest. Christ is not dead but alive.

Reader, would you know the security for the perseverance of God's own people? Would you know why it is that Christ's sheep shall never perish, and none shall ever pluck them out of His hand? It is a miraculous thing. When you look at the believer's heart, listen to the believer's prayers, mark the believer's confessions—when you see how a just man may fall, sometimes seven times—when you see, with all this, the believer's perseverance, it is a marvel indeed. To carry a candle upon a stormy night, when winds and gusty blasts are blowing from every quarter—to carry it still burning, steadily burning, along the street—this is a wonderful achievement.—To go over a stormy sea in a little boat, to mount billow after billow, and not see the waves breaking over the boat, and overturning it,—this is well-nigh a miracle.—To see a little child tottering along the crowded street, a child some three or four years old—to see it tottering on and making its way in safety, from one end of a long street to the other—this is a mighty marvel. But after all, what is this but the life, and history, and experience of every true Christian? Though he falls, he rises again; though he is cast down, he is not destroyed. He goes on from one position to another, like the moon upon a stormy night, plunging from one cloud into another, yet by and by shining out again and walking in brightness. What is the secret of it all? It is the continual intercession of a mighty Friend at the right hand of God—a Friend that never slumbers and

never sleeps—a Friend who cares for the believer morning, noon, and night. The intercession of Christ is the secret of the perseverance of the Christian.

Reader, you would do well to study the words of the Apostle in the 5th chapter of Romans: "Much more then," he says, "being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him; for if when we were enemies we were reconciled by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." Mark the connexion: "Being already justified by his death, we shall be saved,"—and saved by what? "By his life," by His ever living to make intercession for us. Wise and beautiful is the comparison made by that master of allegory, John Bunyan, in the "Pilgrim's Progress." He tells us how Christian was taken into the Interpreter's house, and how the Interpreter showed him many things wonderful and instructive. In one place he took him into a room where there was a fire burning, and showed him one ever pouring water upon that fire, and yet the water did not quench the fire. However much water he poured on, still the fire went on burning steadily. Then said the Interpreter, "Knowest thou what this means?" When Christian did not know, he took him behind the fire, and showed him one pouring on oil out of a vessel. This oil fed the fire, and made it burn more fiercely, notwithstanding all the water that was poured upon it. Then the Interpreter told him that this was a picture of Jesus Christ's intercession. That fire was the fire of grace in the believer's heart. He that poured on the water was the enemy of souls, the devil.


But He that poured on the oil, standing behind the fire, was the Lord Jesus Christ, who by continual intercession and the supply of His Spirit, secretly and unseen by man, kept alive His own work in the believer's heart, and did not allow Satan and all his agents to get a victory over him.

Would you know the secret of the believer's boldness in prayer? It is a marvel how a man that feels his sin so deeply as the believer does, can speak with the confidence the believer frequently does. How one that acknowledges he is wretched, miserable, poor, blind, naked, ruined, undone—who often does what he ought not to do, and leaves undone what he ought to do, and finds no health in him—how such a one as this can go before God with confidence, pour out his heart before Him freely, ask from Him what he requires day after day and not feel afraid,—this is wonderful indeed. What is the secret of it? It is the intercession of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, whereby the true Christian knows His prayers are made acceptable, and received in the court of heaven. What is the believer's prayer in itself? A poor, weak thing, unfit to rise above the ground. I know nothing it is more like than a bank-note without the signature in the corner. What is the value of that bank note without the signature? Nothing at all. Once get a few words, a very few letters, traced in ink upon the corner of that bank-note, and that which was a piece of waste paper a few moments before becomes worth, it may be, many hundred pounds, through the signature being attached to it. So it is with the intercession of Christ. He signs, endorses, and presents the

believer's petitions, and through His all-prevailing intercession they are heard on high, and bring down blessings upon the Christian's soul.

Would you know the secret of daily comfort in all the toil, and business, and distractions we have to go through? We all know that they who have to do work in any secular calling, find the work oftentimes a sore burden to their souls. Oftentimes in the morning they feel, "How can I get through this day without a defiled conscience, without being sorely troubled and tempted to forget my God?" How shall a man get through the day with comfort, fill his office in the world, do his duty in the position to which God has called him? Let him lay hold upon the intercession of Jesus Christ. Let him grasp the great thought, that Christ not merely died for him, but rose again, and still lives for him.

There is a story recorded of one who lived some 200 years ago—a man well known in his day and generation—a man who left behind a character as pure and unsullied as any one who fell in the unhappy Commonwealth wars—I allude to the great Lord Falkland. It is recorded of Lord Falkland during the Commonwealth wars, when he was often engaged in duties from morning till night, that a common prayer of his before leaving his tent was something of this kind, "Lord, I am going this day to do the duty whereunto I am called. I may sometimes forget thee. I cannot have my thoughts at all times as fully fixed upon thee as I wish. But, Lord, if I this day forget thee, do not thou forget me." **This is the thought that every believer should lay hold**



upon who has much to do in the business of this world. Rising from his bed in the morning, going from his room every morning, leaving his house every morning, let him bear in mind, "There is One living in heaven who intercedes for me, while I am following my lawful calling. Although I may be absorbed in business, and obliged to give up all the powers of my poor weak mind to it, still there lives One who never forgets me." He may say, as Lord Falkland said, "Lord, if I this day forget thee, do not thou forget me."

Last of all, would you know the secret of comfort in looking forward to that heaven whereunto every believer desires to go? I believe there are few children of God who do not sometimes feel anxious, troubled, and cast down, when they think quietly about the eternal habitation towards which they are travelling. The nature of it, the manner of it, the employments of it, their own apparent unfitness and unmeetness for it, will sometimes perplex their minds. These thoughts will sometimes come across the believer's mind, especially in times of sickness, filling him with heaviness, and making his heart sink. Now I know no remedy against these thoughts to be compared to the recollection of the continual intercession of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Christ is gone into heaven to be the forerunner of a people who are to follow after Him. He is gone to prepare a place for them:—and the place whereto He goes is the place whereto His people are to go by and by. When they go there they will find all things made ready, a place for every one, and a fitting and proper place, too, through the intercession of their Lord and Saviour.

There never will be a time when their company will not be liked in heaven. There never will be a time when their old sins—the sins of their youth and their backslidings—their wickedness before conversion—their profligacy, it may be, before the grace of God came into their hearts—there never will be a day when all these sins shall come up against them, and make them feel abashed and ashamed in heaven. Christ will be in the midst. Christ will ever stand interceding. Where Christ is, there His people will be. Where He lives, His perfect merit, His spotless righteousness, His intercession, will make them perfect in the sight of God the Father. They will stand in heaven seen in Christ, clothed in Christ, members of Christ, part of Christ, and so will possess a firm and solid and eternal title to the eternal joys which shall be hereafter.

I will now conclude this subject by a few words of application to all into whose hands it may fall. My heart's desire and prayer to God is, that the words I have been writing may yet bear fruit in your soul. In order that they may do so, I offer a few words of faithful and affectionate application.

1. I would *offer counsel* first to all who are anxious and troubled respecting their soul's salvation, and yet know not what to do. Reader, if you are such a person, I charge you and entreat you, I beseech you and invite you to come into the way of which I have been speaking in these pages. I beseech you to come to God by the old and tried way, the way of faith in Jesus Christ. Draw near to God pleading the name of Jesus. Begin

this very day to cry mightily unto God in the name of Jesus on behalf of your soul. Say not you have anything to plead for yourself. You have nothing to plead. Your life, your thoughts, your ways, all alike condemn you. Say nothing about yourself but this, That you are a sinner, a great sinner, a guilty sinner a condemned sinner; but because you are a sinner, you turn to God. Come to Him in the name of Jesus, saying you have heard that through Jesus a sinner may come near Him. Tell Him that you are a sinner, a great sinner, and an unworthy one. But tell Him that you come in the faith of His promises, in the confidence of His own Bible invitation, and in the name of Jesus, and for the sake of Jesus, and on account of Jesus, you ask to be received, heard, pardoned, forgiven, and accepted. Tell Him that you wish to have your name—even that name of yours connected hitherto with worldliness, thoughtlessness, carelessness, and sin—added to the list of God's dear children.

Will you say that you are afraid to come to God? Your fear is needless. You shall not be cast out if you will but come in the way of faith in Christ. Our God is not "an austere man." Our Father in heaven is full of mercy, love, and grace. I yield to none in desire to exalt the love, mercy, and tenderness of God the Father. I will not concede, for one moment, that what is called an evangelical ministry, will not magnify the mercy, love, and compassion of God the Father as much as any ministry on earth. We know that God is holy. We know He is just. We believe that He can be angry with them that go on still in sin. But we also believe

that to those who draw near to Him in Christ Jesus, He is most merciful, most loving, and most tender, most compassionate. We tell you that the cross of Jesus Christ was the result and consequence of that love. The cross was not the cause and reason of God's mercy, but the result and consequence of the everlasting love of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, towards a poor, lost, and bankrupt world. Draw near in faith, dear reader, by that living way, Christ Jesus, to the Father. Think not for a moment—the unworthy thought shall never prove true—that so drawing near to God the Father by Christ, God the Father will not receive you. He will receive you gladly. As the father did to the prodigal son when he ran to meet him, fell on his neck and kissed him, so will God the Father do to that soul that draws near to Him in the name of Christ.

2. In the next place, *I would cheer* those readers who have walked in the way of God, and yet are afraid of falling. Why should you be afraid? What should make you fear? What should make you suppose that you shall ever be allowed to fall away, while Jesus Christ lives at the right hand of God to make intercession for you? All the power of the Lord Jesus Christ is pledged upon your behalf. He has undertaken to care for all the flock that God the Father has committed into His hand. He will care for it. He has cared for it. He went to the cross for it. He died for it. He is ever at the right hand of God, and has not ceased to care for it. Every member of that flock—the weakest,

the feeblest member of that flock—is equally dear to the Lord and Saviour, and none shall pluck the least of Christ's sheep out of God's hand. Can you stop the tides of the sea, and make them not rise at your command? Can you make the waters stay when the tide begins to fall? Can you prevent the sun in heaven going down in the west, or prevent the same sun from rising to-morrow morning in the east? You cannot do it; the thing is impossible. And all the power of devils, all the power of the world, and all the enemies of the Christian, shall not be able to pluck out of the hand of Jesus Christ one single soul who has been brought by the Spirit's teaching to true union with Christ, and for whom Jesus Christ intercedes. The days of Christ's weakness have passed away. He was "crucified through weakness," and was weak on our account when He went to the cross. The days of His weakness are over. The days of His power have begun. Pilate shall no more condemn Him. He shall come to condemn Pilate. All power is His in heaven and earth, and all that power is engaged on behalf of His believing people.

3. Finally, *let me gladden* all believers who read this book, by reminding them that Christ is yet to come again. The Great High Priest is yet to come forth from the Holy of Holies, to bless all the people who have believed on Him. One part of His work He did when He died upon the cross. Another part of His work He is still doing—interceding for us at God's right hand. But the third part of the High

Priest's office remains yet to be done. He has yet to come forth from the Holy of Holies as the high-priest did on the day of atonement—to come forth from within the vail to bless the people. That part of Christ's work is yet to come. He is now gone into heaven itself. He is within the Holy of Holies. He is gone behind the vail. But our Great High Priest—a greater one than Aaron—shall yet come forth one day.—He shall come in power and great glory. He shall come as He left the world, when He went up in the clouds of heaven. He shall come to gather from the north and from the south, from the east and from the west, all who have loved His name and confessed Him before men—all who have heard His voice and followed Him. He shall gather them together into one happy company. There shall be no more weakness, and no more sorrow,—no more parting, and no more separation,—no more sickness, and no more death,—no more disputing, and no more controversy,—no more fighting with the world, the flesh, and devil,—and, best of all, no more sin. That day shall be a happy day indeed, when the High Priest comes forth to do the third, last part of His work, to bless His believing people.

“He that testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.” (Rev. xxii. 20.)

No More Crying!

REV. XXI. 4.

“ God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes ; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain.”

BELOVED CHILDREN,

A Bible text stands at the top of this page. I should like you to read it twice over. I am going to tell you something which, I hope, will make you remember that text as long as you live.

I am going to tell you about three places, of which the Bible says a great deal. It matters little what we know about some places. But it matters much to know something about the three places of which I am now going to speak.

I. Firstly,—There is a place where there is a great deal of crying.

II. Secondly,—There is a place where there is nothing else but crying.


III. Thirdly,—There is a place where there is no crying at all.

I. First of all, THERE IS A PLACE WHERE THERE IS A GREAT DEAL OF CRYING.

What is that place? It is the world, in which you and I live. It is a world full of beautiful and pleasant things. The sun shining by day and the stars by night,—the blue hills looking up to heaven, and the rolling sea ebbing and flowing,—the broad quiet lakes, and the rushing restless rivers,—the flowers blooming in the spring, and the fields full of corn in autumn,—the birds singing in the woods, and the lambs playing in the meadows,—all, all are beautiful things. I could look at them for hours and say, “What a beautiful world it is!” But still it is a world where there is a great deal of crying. It is a world where there are many tears.

There was “crying” in Bible times. Hagar wept when she thought Ishmael was dying. Abraham mourned when Sarah died. Joseph wept when his brothers sold him into Egypt. David wept when Absalom was killed. There was weeping at Jerusalem when good king Josiah was slain in battle. There was weeping at Bethlehem when Herod killed all the little children who were two years old. These things, and many like them, you will find in your Bibles.

There is “crying” now all over the world. Little



babies cry when they want anything, or feel pain. Boys and girls cry when they are hurt, or frightened, or corrected. Grown up people cry sometimes when they are in trouble, or when they see those die whom they love. In short, wherever there is sorrow and pain, there is "crying."

I dare say you have seen people come to church all dressed in black. That is called being in mourning. Some relation or friend of these people is dead, and therefore they dress in black. Well! remember when you see people in mourning, somebody has been "crying."

I dare say you have seen graves in churchyards, and have heard that when people die, they are buried there. Some of them are very little graves, not longer than you are. Well! remember that when those graves were made, and little coffins were let down into them, there was "crying."

Children, did you ever think what all this crying came from? Did you ever consider how it first began? Did you ever hear how weeping and tears came into the world? God did not make crying;—that is certain. All that God made was "very good." Listen to me and I will tell you how "crying" began.

Crying came into the world by reason of sin. Sin is the cause of all the weeping, and tears, and sorrow, and pain, which there are upon earth. All the crying began when Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit and became sinners. It was sin which brought into the world pain, and sickness, and death. It was sin which brought into the world selfishness, and illnature, and unkindness, and quarrelling, and stealing, and fighting. If

there had been no wickedness, there would have been no weeping. If there had been no sin, there would have been no "crying."

See now, my beloved children, how much you ought to hate sin. All the unhappiness in the world came from sin. How strange and wonderful it is that any one can take pleasure in sin! Do not let that be the case with you. Watch against sin. Fight with it. Avoid it. Listen not to it. Take the advice of St. Paul;—"Abhor that which is evil." Take the advice of Solomon:—"When sinners entice thee, consent thou not." Say to yourself every morning, "Sin caused crying, and so I will hate sin."

See again, my beloved children, how foolish it is to expect perfect happiness in this world. It is expecting what you will not find. The world is a place where there is much "crying," and where things do not always go on pleasantly. I hear many boys and girls talking of the pleasures they will have when they are men and women. I am sorry for them when I hear them talking in this way. I know they are mistaken. I know they will be disappointed. They will find when they grow up, that they cannot get through the world without many troubles and cares. There are no roses without thorns. There are no years without dark and rainy days. There is no living on earth without "crying" and tears.

II. I will now speak of the second place about which I promised to tell you something. **THERE IS A PLACE WHERE THERE IS NOTHING ELSE BUT CRYING.**

What is this place? It is the place to which all bad people go when they are dead. It is the place which the Bible calls hell. In hell there is **no** laughter and smiling. There is nothing but "weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth." In hell there is no happiness. Those who go there cry on night and day without stopping. They have no rest. They never go to sleep and wake up happy. They never stop crying in hell.

Beloved children, I am sorry to tell you that there are many people going to hell. "Broad is the way that leadeth unto destruction, and many there be which go in it." I am afraid that many children are going to hell. I see many boys and girls who are so naughty and ill-behaved, that I am sure they are not fit for heaven. And if they are not fit for heaven, where will they go if they die? There is only one other place to which they can go. **THEY MUST GO TO HELL.**

Dear children, it makes me sad to say these things. I cannot bear the thought of boys and girls going to that dreadful place where there is nothing but crying. My heart's desire and prayer to God for you is, that you may not go to hell. But I want you to know some things which you must mind if you would not go to hell. Listen to me now while I ask you a few questions.

For one thing I will ask you,—Do you love Jesus Christ? You ought to love Him. He died for your sins upon the cross, that He might save you from hell. He allowed Himself to be shut up in the dark prison of the grave, that your sins might be forgiven, and that you might not be chained in hell for ever. Dear children,

think about this! If you love ~~nothing~~ but play, and eating, and drinking, and fine clothes, and story-books, and do not love Christ, you are not in the right way. Take care. If you do not mind, you will go at last to the place where there is ~~NOTHING~~ BUT "CRYING."

I will ask you another thing.—Do you try to please Christ? You ought to do so. I read in the Bible that Jesus Christ said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments."—"Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you." Dear children, think about this! If you are selfish, or passionate, or tell lies, or quarrel with one another, or do not do as you are bid, you are not Christ's friends. Take care. If you do not mind, you will go at last to the place where there is ~~NOTHING~~ BUT "CRYING."

I will ask you another thing.—Do you keep the Sunday holy? You ought to do so. God commands it, and it is for your good. I once heard of a little boy who went to play upon the ice on Sunday instead of coming home straight from church. "Tommy," said his mother, "why did you do so?"—"Mother," said Tommy, "I did not remember that it was Sunday."—"Tommy," said his mother, "that is the very thing God told you not to do. He said in the fourth commandment,—'Remember,—remember to keep holy the Sabbath.'" Dear children, think about this! If you do not like to give God one day in the week, your hearts are not right. Take care. If you do not mind, you will go at last to the place where there is ~~NOTHING~~ BUT "CRYING."

I will ask you another thing.—Do you say your prayers? You ought to do so. God will never be a

friend to you if you do not speak to Him, and ask Him to take care of your soul and make you good. If you never pray, or say your prayers without thinking, your heart will soon be full of mischief and sin. It will never be empty for a day. I once heard of a boy who had a little garden given to him all full of flowers. But he did nothing for it. He never raked it, or weeded it. And after a few weeks the weeds came up so thick that the flowers died. Dear children, think of this! If you do not ask God to put the Holy Spirit in your hearts, the devil will soon fill them with sin. Take care. If you do not mind, you will go at last to the place where there is NOTHING BUT "CRYING."

I will ask you one more question.—Do you read your Bible? You ought to do so. That beautiful book is able to keep you from hell and save your soul. If you use the Bible rightly, you will not be hurt by the devil. I once heard of a little boy in Africa who was sleeping with his father in the open air, near a fire. He awoke in the middle of the night, and saw a great lion close to him, looking at if he was going to seize him. The little boy took up a lighted stick out of the fire, and put it in the lion's face, and drove him away. Dear children, think of this! The devil is "a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour." But he cannot harm you, if you make a right use of the Bible. If you would drive him from you, you must read your Bible. If you can read, and yet neglect your Bible, you are in great danger. Take care. If you do not mind, the devil will carry you off to the place where there is NOTHING BUT "CRYING."

Beloved children, remember my five questions. Think of them often, and try your own hearts by them. I am not afraid about children who love Jesus, and try to please Him, and keep the Sunday holy, and pray and read their Bibles. I am not afraid that they will go to hell if they die. But I am afraid about children who care nothing about these things. I think they are in great danger.

III. I will now speak of the third place about which I promised to tell you something. THERE IS A PLACE WHERE THERE IS NO CRYING AT ALL.

What is this place? It is heaven. It is the place to which all good people go when they are dead. There all is joy and happiness. There no tears are shed. There sorrow, and pain, and sickness, and death, can never enter in. There can be no crying in heaven, because there is nothing that can cause grief.

Dear children, there will be no more lessons in heaven. All will have been learned. The school will be closed. The rod and correction will be laid aside for ever. There will be an eternal holiday.

There will be no more work in heaven. Man will no longer need to labour for his bread. The head will no longer have to ache with thinking. The hands will no longer be stiff and brown with toiling. There will be an eternal rest for the people of God.

There will be no sickness in heaven. Pain, and disease, and weakness, and death will not be known. The people who dwell there shall no more say, "I am sick." They will be always well. There will be nothing but health and strength for evermore.

There will be no sin in heaven. There will be no bad tempers, no unkind words, no spiteful actions. The great tempter, the Devil, will not be allowed to come in and spoil the happiness. There shall be nothing but holiness and love for evermore.

Best of all, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself will be in the midst of heaven. His people shall at last see Him face to face, and go out from His presence no more. He shall gather His lambs into His bosom, and wipe away all tears from their eyes. Where He is will be fulness of joy, and at his right hand shall be pleasures for evermore.

Dear children, would you not like to go to heaven? We cannot live always in this world. A day will come when we must die, like the old people who have died already. Children, would you not like to go to heaven when you die? Listen to me, and I will tell you something about the way by which you must go.

If you would go to heaven, you must have your sins forgiven, and your hearts made new and good. There is only one who can do this for you. That One is the Lord Jesus Christ. God has appointed Him to be the Friend of sinners. He can wash away your sins in His own precious blood. He can make your hearts new by putting the holy Spirit in them. He is the Way and the Door into heaven. He has the keys in His hand. Children, if you want to go to heaven, you must ask Jesus Christ to let you in.

Ask Jesus in prayer to get ready a place for you in that world where there is no "crying." Ask Him to put your name in His book of life, and to make you

one of His people. Ask Him to cleanse you from all your sins, and to put the Holy Ghost in your heart. Ask Him to give you power to fight His battle against sin, the world, and the devil. Ask Him to give you grace to make you good while you are young, and good when you grow up, that so you may be safe while you live, and happy for ever when you die.

Children, Jesus Christ is ready to do all this, if you will only ask Him. He has done it for many people already. He is waiting to do it for you at this very time. Do not be afraid to ask Him. Tell Him you have heard that He was very kind to people when He was on earth, and ask Him to be kind to you. Remind Him how kind He was to the poor dying thief on the cross. Say to Him, "Lord Jesus, remember me; I want to go to heaven. Lord, think upon me. Lord give me the Holy Spirit. Lord, pardon my sins, and give me a new heart. Lord Jesus, save me."

And now, children, I have kept my word. I have told you of three places. I have told you of a place where there is nothing but crying. I hope none of you will go there.—I have told you of a place where there is no crying. I hope you will all go there.—I have told you of a place where there is a great deal of crying. That place is the world in which you are living. Would you like, last of all, to know the best way to be happy in this world? Listen to me, and I will tell you.

The happiest people in this world are those who make the Bible the rule of their lives. They read their Bibles often. They believe what the Bible says. They love that Saviour Jesus Christ of whom the Bible speaks.

They try to obey what the Bible commands. None are so happy as these people. They cannot prevent sickness and trouble coming to them sometimes. But they learn from the Bible to bear them patiently. Children, if you would get through the world happily, make the Bible your best Friend.

Shall I tell you a story that I once heard about a little boy and the Bible? Perhaps it will help you to remember what I have just been saying. I want the words I have just written to stick for ever in your minds.

"Father," said this little boy one day, "I do not see any use in reading the Bible. I do not see that it does people any good."—Little Johnny said this in a rather cross and pettish way, and his father thought it best not to begin reasoning with him. "Johnny," he said, "put on your hat, and come out, and take a walk with me."

Johnny's father took him first to a house where there was an old woman who was very poor, and he talked to her about her poverty.—"Sir," said the old woman, "I do not complain. I have read in the Bible these words, 'I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content.'"—"Johnny," said the little boy's father, "hear what the old woman says."

They went on to another house, where there was a young woman who was very ill, and never likely to get better. Johnny's father asked her if she felt afraid to die.—"No!" she said, "I find it written in the Bible, 'Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me.'"

"Johnny," said the little boy's father again, "hear what the young woman says."

Children, when Johnny and his father came home that afternoon from their walk, his father asked him one question. "Johnny," he said, "do you think it is of any use to read the Bible? Do you think reading the Bible does people any good?"

And now what do you think Johnny said? I will tell you. He held down his head, and said nothing. But his face got very red, and he looked very much ashamed.

Children, from that very day Johnny was never heard again to say, "It is of no use reading the Bible."

Beloved children, remember my parting words. The way to get through the world with the least possible crying, is to read the Bible, believe the Bible, pray over the Bible, live by the Bible.

He that goes through life in this way will have the least "crying" in this world. And best of all, he will have NO CRYING AT ALL IN THE WORLD TO COME.

The True Church.*

MATT. XVI. 18.

“ Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

We live in a world in which all things are passing away. Kingdoms, empires, cities, ancient institutions, families, all are liable to change and corruption. One universal law seems to prevail everywhere. In all created things there is a tendency to decay.

There is something saddening and depressing in this. What profit hath a man in the labour of his hands? Is there nothing that shall stand? Is there nothing that shall last? Is there nothing that shall endure? Is there nothing of which we can say—This shall continue for evermore? You have the answer to these questions in the words of our text. Our Lord Jesus

* The following Sermon was preached at Weston-super-mere, in August 1858, on the occasion of the Aggregate Clerical Meeting, held there under the presidency of Archdeacon Law.

Christ speaks of something which shall continue, and not pass away. There is one created thing which is an exception to the universal rule to which I have referred. There is one thing which shall never perish and pass away. That thing is the building founded upon the rock—the church of our Lord Jesus Christ. He declares, in the words you have heard to night: “Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

There are five things in these words which demand your attention:—

I.—*You have a Building*: “My church.”

II.—*A Builder*: Christ says, “I will build My church.”

III.—*A Foundation*: “Upon this rock I will build My church.”

IV.—*Perils Implied*: “The gates of hell.”

V.—*Security Asserted*: “The gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

May God bless the words that shall be spoken. May we all search our own hearts to-night, and know whether or not we belong to this one church. May we all go home to reflect and to pray!

I.—You have, firstly, a *Building* mentioned in the text. The Lord Jesus Christ speaks of “My church.”

Now what is this church? Few inquiries can be made of more importance than this. For want of due attention to this subject, the errors that have crept into

the church, and into the world, are neither few nor small.

The church of our text is no material building. It is no temple made with hands, of wood, or brick, or stone, or marble. It is a company of men and women. It is no particular visible church on earth. It is not the Eastern Church or the Western Church. It is not the Church of England, or the Church of Scotland;—much less is it the Church of Rome. The Church of our text is one that makes far less show in the eyes of man, but is of far more importance in the eyes of God.

The church of our text is made up of all true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. It comprehends all who have repented of sin, and fled to Christ by faith, and been made new creatures in Him. It comprises all God's elect, all who have received God's grace, all who have been washed in Christ's blood, all who have been clothed in Christ's righteousness, all who have been born again and sanctified by Christ's Spirit. All such, of every nation, and people, and tongue, compose the church of our text. This is the body of Christ. This is the flock of Christ. This is the bride. This is the Lamb's wife. This is "the holy Catholic Church" of the Apostle's Creed. This is the "blessed company of all faithful people," spoken of in the communion service of our Prayer-book. This is the church on the rock.

The members of this church do not all worship God in the same way, or use the same form of government. Our own 34th Article declares, "It is not necessary that ceremonies should be in all places one

and alike." But they all worship with one heart. They are all led by one Spirit. They are all really and truly holy. They can all say "Alleluia," and they can all reply "Amen."

This is that church, to which all visible churches on earth are servants and handmaidens. Whether they are Episcopalian, Independent, or Presbyterian, they all serve the interests of the one true church. They are the scaffolding, behind which the great building is carried on. They are the husk, under which the living kernel grows. They have their various degrees of usefulness. The best and worthiest of them is that which trains up most members for Christ's true church. But no visible church has any right to say, "We are the only True Church. We are the men, and wisdom shall die with us." No visible church should ever dare to say, "We shall stand for ever. The gates of hell shall not prevail against me."

This is that church to which belong the Lord's precious promises of preservation, continuance, protection, and final glory. "Whatsoever," says Hooker, "we read in Scripture, concerning the endless love and saving mercy, which God showeth towards His churches, the only proper subject thereof is this church, which we properly term the mystical body of Christ." Small and despised as the true church may be in this world, it is precious and honourable in the sight of God. The temple of Solomon in all its glory was mean and contemptible, in comparison with that church which is built upon a rock.

Men and brethren, see that you hold sound doc-

trine upon the subject of "the church." A mistake here may lead on to dangerous and soul-ruining errors. The church which is made up of true believers, is the church for which we, who are ministers, are specially ordained to preach. The church which comprises all who repent and believe the Gospel, is the church to which we desire you to belong. Our work is not done, and our hearts are not satisfied, until you are made new creatures, and are members of the one true church. Outside of this church there can be no salvation.

II.—I pass on to the second point, to which I proposed to call your attention. Our text contains not merely a building, but a *Builder*. The Lord Jesus Christ declares, "*I will build My church.*"

The true church of Christ is tenderly cared for by all the three persons of the blessed Trinity. In the economy of redemption, beyond all doubt, God the Father chooses, and God the Holy Ghost sanctifies, every member of Christ's mystical body. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, three Persons and one God, co-operate for the salvation of every saved soul. This is truth, which ought never to be forgotten. Nevertheless, there is a peculiar sense in which the help of the church is laid on the Lord Jesus Christ. He is peculiarly and pre-eminently the Redeemer and the Saviour. Therefore it is, that we find Him saying in our text, "*I will build,—the work of building is my special work.*"

It is Christ who calls the members of the church in due time. They are "the called of Jesus Christ." (Rom.

i. 6.) It is Christ who quickens them. "The Son quickeneth whom He will." (John v. 21.) It is Christ who washes away their sins. He "has loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood." (Rev. i. 5.) It is Christ who gives them peace. "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you." (John xiv. 27.) It is Christ who gives them eternal life. "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish." (John x. 28.) It is Christ who grants them repentance. "Him hath God exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance." (Acts v. 31.) It is Christ who enables them to become God's children. "To as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God." (John i. 12.) It is Christ who carries on the work within them when it is begun. "Because I live, ye shall live also." (John xiv. 19.) In short, it has "pleased the Father that in Christ should all fulness dwell." (Coloss. i. 19.) He is the author and finisher of faith. From Him every joint and member of the mystical body of Christians is supplied. Through Him they are strengthened for duty. By Him they are kept from falling. He shall preserve them to the end, and present them faultless before the Father's throne with exceeding great joy. He is all things, and all in all to believers.

The mighty agent by whom the Lord Jesus Christ carries out this work in the number of His churches, is, without doubt, the Holy Ghost. He it is who applies Christ and His benefits to the soul. He it is who is ever renewing, awakening, convincing, leading to the cross, transforming, taking out of the world, stone after stone, and adding it to the mystical building.

But the great chief Builder, who has undertaken to execute the work of redemption and bring it to completion, is the Son of God, the Word who was made flesh. It is Jesus Christ who "builds."

In building the true church, the Lord Jesus condescends to use many subordinate instruments. The ministry of the Gospel, the circulation of the Scriptures, the friendly rebuke, the word spoken in season, the drawing influence of afflictions—all, all are means and appliances by which His work is carried on. But Christ is the great superintending architect, ordering, guiding, directing all that is done. What the sun is to the whole solar system, that Christ is to all the members of the true church. "Paul may plant, and Apollos water, but God giveth the increase." Ministers may preach, and writers may write, but the Lord Jesus Christ alone can build. And except He builds, the work stands still.

Great is the wisdom wherewith the Lord Jesus Christ builds His church. All is done at the right time, and in the right way. Each stone in its turn is put in the right place. Sometimes He chooses great stones, and sometimes He chooses small stones. Sometimes the work goes on fast, and sometimes it goes on slowly. Man is frequently impatient, and thinks that nothing is doing. But man's time is not God's time. A thousand years in His sight are but as a single day. The great Builder makes no mistakes. He knows what He is doing. He sees the end from the beginning. He works by a perfect, unalterable and certain plan. The mightiest conceptions of architects, like Michael Angelo and Wren,

are mere trifling child's play, in comparison with Christ's wise counsels respecting His church.

Great is the condescension and mercy, which Christ exhibits in building His church. He often chooses the most unlikely and roughest stones, and fits them into a most excellent work. He despises none, and rejects none, on account of former sins and past transgressions. He delights to show mercy. He often takes the most thoughtless and ungodly, and transforms them into polished corners of His spiritual temple.

Great is the power which Christ displays in building His church. He carries on His work in spite of opposition from the world, the flesh, and the devil. In storm, in tempest, through troublous times, silently, quietly, without noise, without stir, without excitement, the building progresses, like Solomon's temple. "I will work," He declares, "and none shall let it."

Brethren, the children of this world take little or no interest in the building of this church. They care little for the conversion of souls. What are broken spirits and penitent hearts to them? It is all foolishness in their eyes. But while the children of this world care nothing, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God. For the preserving of that church, the laws of nature have oftentimes been suspended. For the good of that church, all the providential dealings of God in this world are ordered and arranged. For the elect's sake, wars are brought to an end, and peace is given to a nation. Statesmen, rulers, emperors, kings, presidents, heads of governments, have their schemes and plans, and think them of vast importance. But there is another work

going on of infinitely greater moment, for which they are all but as the axes and saws in God's hands. That work is the gathering in of living stones into the one true church. How little are we told in God's word about unconverted men compared with what we are told about believers! The history of Nimrod, the mighty hunter, is dismissed in a few words. The history of Abraham, the father of the faithful, occupies several chapters. Nothing in Scripture is so important as the concerns of the true church. The world takes up little of God's word. The church and its story take up much.

For ever let us thank God, my beloved brethren, that the building of the one true church is laid on the shoulders of One that is mighty. Let us bless God that it does not rest upon man. Let us bless God that it does not depend on missionaries, ministers, or committees. Christ is the almighty Builder. He will carry on His work, though nations and visible churches do not know their duty. Christ will never fail. That which He hath undertaken He will certainly accomplish.

III.—I pass on to the third point, which I proposed to consider—The *Foundation* upon which this church is built. The Lord Jesus Christ tells us, "Upon this Rock will I build my church."

What did the Lord Jesus Christ mean, when He spoke of this foundation? Did He mean the apostle Peter, to whom He was speaking? I think assuredly not. I can see no reason, if He meant Peter, why He did not say, "Upon thee" will I build My church. If He had

meant Peter, He would have said, I will build My church on thee, as plainly as He said, "to thee will I give the keys." No! it was not the person of the apostle Peter, but the good confession which the apostle had just made. It was not Peter, the erring, unstable man; but the mighty truth which the Father had revealed to Peter. It was the truth concerning Jesus Christ himself which was the rock. It was Christ's Mediatorship, and Christ's Messiahship. It was the blessed truth, that Jesus was the promised Saviour, the true Surety, the real Intercessor between God and man. This was the rock, and this the foundation, upon which the church of Christ was to be built.

My brethren, this foundation was laid at a mighty cost. It needed that the Son of God should take our nature upon Him, and in that nature live, suffer, and die, not for His own sins, but for ours. It needed that in that nature Christ should go to the grave, and rise again. It needed that in that nature Christ should go up to heaven, to sit at the right hand of God, having obtained eternal redemption for all His people. No other foundation but this could have borne the weight of that church of which our text speaks. No other foundation could have met the necessities of a world of sinners.

That foundation once obtained, is very strong. It can bear the weight of the sin of all the world. It has borne the weight of all the sins of all the believers who have built on it. Sins of thought, sins of the imagination, sins of the heart, sins of the head, sins which every one has seen, and sins which no man knows, sins against

God, and sins against man, sins of all kinds and descriptions,—that mighty rock can bear the weight of all these sins and not give way. The mediatorial office of Christ is a remedy sufficient for all the sins of all the world.

To this one foundation every member of Christ's true church is joined. In many things believers are dis-united and disagreed. In the matter of their soul's foundation they are all of one mind. They are all built on the rock. Ask where they get their peace, and hope, and joyful expectation of good things to come. You would find that all flows from that one mighty truth, Christ the Mediator between God and man, and the office that Christ holds, as the High-priest and Surety of sinners.

Here is the point which demands our personal attention. Are we upon the rock? Are we really joined to the one foundation? What says that good old divine, Archbishop Leighton? "God has laid this precious stone for this very purpose, that weary sinners may rest upon it. The multitude of imaginary believers lie round about it, but they are none the better for that, any more than stones that lie loose in heaps, near a foundation, but not joined unto it. There is no benefit to us by Christ, without union with Him."

Look to your foundation, my beloved brethren, if you would know whether or not you are members of the one true church. It is a point that may be known to yourselves. Your public worship we can see, but we cannot see whether you are personally built upon the rock. Your attendance at the Lord's table we can see, but we cannot

see whether you are joined to Christ, and one with Christ, and Christ in you. But all shall come to light one day. The secrets of all hearts shall be exposed. Perhaps you go to church regularly, you love your Prayer-book, you are constant in attending on every means of grace your church supplies. All this is right and good, so far as it goes. But all this time, see that you make no mistake about your own personal salvation. See that your own soul is upon the rock. Without this, all else is nothing. Without this, you will never stand in the day of judgment. Better a thousand times in that day to be found in a cottage upon the rock, than in a palace upon the sand !

IV.—I proceed in the fourth place to speak of the *Implied Trials* of the church, to which our text refers. There is mention made of “the gates of hell.” By that expression we are meant to understand the power of the devil !

The history of Christ’s true church has always been one of conflict and war. It has been constantly assailed by a deadly enemy, Satan, the prince of this world. The devil hates the true church of Christ with an undying hatred. He is ever stirring up opposition against all its members. He is ever urging the children of this world to do his will, and injure and harass the people of God. If he cannot bruise the head, he will bruise the heel. If he cannot rob believers of heaven, he will vex them by the way.

For six thousand years this enmity has gone on. Millions of the ungodly have been the devil’s agents,

and done the devil's work, though they knew it not. The Pharoahs, the Herods, the Neros, the Julians, the Dioclesians, the bloody Maries—what were they all but Satan's tools, when they persecuted the disciples of Jesus Christ.

Warfare with the powers of hell has been the experience of the whole body of Christ. It has always been a bush burning, though not consumed—a woman fleeing into the wilderness, but not swallowed up. The visible churches have their times of prosperity and seasons of peace, but never has there been a time of peace for the true church. Its conflict is perpetual. Its battle never ends.

Warfare with the powers of hell is the experience of every individual member of the true church. Each has to fight. What are the lives of all the saints, but records of battles? What were such men as Paul, and James, and Peter, and John, and Polycarp, and Ignatius, and Augustine, and Luther, and Calvin, and Latimer, and Baxter, but soldiers engaged in a constant warfare? Sometimes their persons have been assailed, and sometimes their property. Sometimes they have been harassed by calumnies and slanders, and sometimes by open persecution. But in one way or another the devil has been continually warring against the church. The "gates of hell" have been continually assaulting the people of Christ.

Men and brethren, we who preach the Gospel can hold out to all who come to Christ, exceeding great and precious promises. We can offer boldly to you in our Master's name, the peace of God which passeth all un-

derstanding. Mercy, free grace, and full salvation, are offered to every one who will come to Christ, and believe on Him. But we promise you no peace with the world, or with the devil. We warn you, on the contrary, that there must be warfare, so long as you are in the body. We would not keep you back, or deter you from Christ's service. But we would have you "count the cost," and fully understand what Christ's service entails. Hell is behind you. Heaven is before you. Home lies on the other side of a troubled sea. Thousands, tens of thousands have crossed these stormy waters, and in spite of all opposition, have reached the haven where they would be. Hell has assailed them, but has not prevailed. Go forward, beloved brethren, and fear not the adversary. Only abide in Christ, and the victory is sure.

Marvel not at the enmity of the gates of hell. "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own." So long as the world is the world, and the devil the devil, so long there must be warfare, and believers in Christ must be soldiers. The world hated Christ, and the world will hate true Christians, as long as the earth stands. As the great reformer, Luther, said, "Cain will go on murdering Abel so long as the church is on earth."

Be prepared for the enmity of the gates of hell. Put on the whole armour of God. The tower of David contains a thousand bucklers, all ready for the use of God's people. The weapons of our warfare have been tried by millions of poor sinners like ourselves, and have never been found to fail.

Be patient under the enmity of the gates of hell. It

is all working together for your good. It tends to sanctify. It keeps you awake. It makes you humble. It drives you nearer to the Lord Jesus Christ. It weans you from the world. It helps to make you pray more. Above all, it makes you long for heaven, and say with heart as well as lips, "Come, Lord Jesus."

Be not cast down by the enmity of hell. The warfare of the true child of God is as much a mark of grace as the inward peace which he enjoys. No cross, no crown! No conflict, no saving Christianity! "Blessed are ye," said our Lord Jesus Christ, "when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake."

V.—There remains one thing more to be considered: the *Security* of the true church of Christ. There is a glorious promise given by the mighty Builder, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it." He who cannot lie has pledged His royal word, that all the powers of hell shall never overthrow His church. It shall continue, and stand, in spite of every assault. It shall never be overcome. All other created things perish and pass away, but not the church of Christ. The hand of outward violence, or the moth of inward decay, prevail over everything else, but not over the temple that Christ builds.

Empires have risen and fallen in rapid succession. Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Tyre, Carthage, Rome, Greece, Venice—Where are all these now? They were all the creations of man's hand, and have passed away. But the church of Christ lives on.

The mightiest cities have become heaps of ruins. The broad walls of Babylon are sunk to the ground. The palaces of Nineveh are mounds of dust. The hundred gates of Thebes are only matters of history. Tyre is a place where fishermen hang their nets. Carthage is a desolation. Yet all this time the true church stands. The gates of hell do not prevail against it.

The earliest visible churches have in many cases decayed and perished. Where is the church of Ephesus and the church of Antioch? Where is the church of Alexandria and the church of Constantinople? Where are the Corinthian, and Philippian, and Thessalonian churches? Where, indeed, are they all? They departed from the Word of God. They were proud of their bishops, and synods, and ceremonies, and learning, and antiquity. They did not glory in the true cross of Christ. They did not hold fast the Gospel. They did not give Jesus His rightful office, or faith its rightful place. They are now among the things that have been. Their candlestick has been taken away. But all this time the true church has lived on.

Has the true church been oppressed in one country? It has fled to another. Has it been trampled on and oppressed in one soil? It has taken root and flourished in some other climate. Fire, sword, prisons, fines, penalties, have never been able to destroy its vitality. Its persecutors have died and gone to their own place, but the word of God has lived, and grown, and multiplied. Weak as this true church may appear to the eye of man, it is an anvil which has broken many a hammer in times past, and perhaps will break many

more before the end. He that lays hands on it, is touching the apple of God's eye.

The promise of our text is true of the whole body of the true church. Christ will never be without a witness in the world. He has had a people in the worst of times. He had seven thousand in Israel even in the days of Ahab. There are some now, I believe, in the dark places of the Roman and Greek churches, who, in spite of much weakness, are serving Christ. The devil may rage horribly. The church may in some countries be brought exceedingly low. But the gates of hell shall never entirely prevail.

The promise of our text is true of every individual member of the church. Some of God's people have been brought very low, so that they despaired of their safety. Some have fallen sadly, as David and Peter did. Some have departed from the faith for a time, like Cranmer and Jewell. Many have been tried by cruel doubts and fears. But all have got safe home at last, the youngest as well as the oldest, the weakest as well as the strongest. And so it will be to the end. Can you prevent to-morrow's sun from rising? Can you prevent the tide in the Bristol Channel from ebbing and flowing? Can you prevent the planets moving in their respective orbits? Then, and then alone, can you prevent the salvation of any believer, however feeble, of any living stone in that church which is built upon the rock, however small or insignificant that stone may appear.

The true church is Christ's body. Not one bone in that mystical body shall ever be broken.—The true church is Christ's bride. They whom God hath joined

in everlasting covenant, shall never be put asunder.—The true church is Christ's flock. When the lion came and took a lamb out of David's flock, David arose and delivered the lamb from his mouth. Christ will do the same. He is David's greater son. Not a single sick lamb in Christ's flock shall perish. He will say to His Father in the last day, "Of those whom thou gavest me I have lost none."—The true church is the wheat of the earth. It may be sifted, winnowed, buffeted, tossed to and fro. But not one grain shall be lost. The tares and chaff shall be burned. The wheat shall be gathered into the barn.—The true church is Christ's army. The Captain of our salvation loses none of his soldiers. His plans are never defeated. His supplies never fail. His muster roll is the same at the end as it was at the beginning. Of the men that marched gallantly out of England a few years ago in the Crimean war, how many never came back! Regiments that went forth, strong and cheerful, with bands playing and banners flying, laid their bones in a foreign land, and never returned to their native country. But it is not so with Christ's army. Not one of His soldiers shall be missing at last. He Himself declares "They shall never perish."

The devil may cast some of the members of the true church into prison. He may kill, and burn, and torture, and hang. But after he has killed the body, there is nothing more that he can do. He cannot hurt the soul. When the French troops took Rome a few years ago, they found on the walls of a prison cell, under the Inquisition, the words of a prisoner. Who he was, we

know not. But his words are worthy of remembrance. Though dead, he yet speaketh. He had written on the walls, very likely after an unjust trial, and a still more unjust excommunication, the following striking words:—"Blessed Jesus, they cannot cast me out of thy true church." That record is true. Not all the power of Satan can cast out of Christ's true church one single believer.

The children of this world may wage fierce warfare against the church, but they cannot stop the work of conversion. What said the sneering Emperor Julian, in the early ages of the church—"What is the carpenter's son doing now?" An aged Christian made answer, "He is making a coffin for Julian himself." But a few months passed away, when Julian, with all his pomp and power, died in battle. Where was Christ when the fires of Smithfield were lighted, and when Latimer and Ridley were burnt at the stake? What was Christ doing then? He was still carrying on His work of building. That work will ever go on, even in troublous times.

Fear not, beloved brethren, to begin serving Christ. He to whom you commit your souls has all power in heaven and earth, and He will keep you. He will never let you be cast away. Relatives may oppose. Neighbours may mock. The world may slander and sneer. Fear not! Fear not! The powers of hell shall never prevail against your soul. Greater is He that is for you, than all they that are against you.

Fear not for the church of Christ, my brethren, when ministers die, and saints are taken away. Christ can

ever maintain His own cause. He will raise up better and brighter stars. The stars are all in His right hand. Leave off all anxious thought about the future. Cease to be cast down by the measures of statesmen, or the plots of wolves in sheep's clothing. Christ will ever provide for His own Church. Christ will take care that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. All is going on well, though our eyes may not see it. The kingdoms of this world shall yet become the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ.

Suffer me now to say a few words of practical application of this sermon. I speak to many, whom I speak to for the first time. I speak, perhaps, to many whom I speak to for the last time. Let not this service conclude without an effort to press home the sermon on each heart.

1. My first word of application shall be a question. What shall that question be? Wherewith shall I approach you? What shall I ask? I ask you, whether you are a member of the one true church of Christ? Are you in the highest, the best sense, a "churchman" in the sight of God? You know what I mean. I look far beyond the Church of England. I speak of the church built upon the rock. I ask you, with all solemnity—Are you a member of that one church of Christ? Are you joined to the great Foundation? Have you received the Holy Ghost? Does the Spirit witness with your spirit, that you are one with Christ, and Christ with you? I beseech you, in the name of God, to lay to heart this question, and to ponder it well.

Take heed to yourselves, dear brethren, if you cannot give a satisfactory answer to my inquiry. Take heed, take heed, that you do not make shipwreck of faith. Take heed, lest at last the gates of hell prevail against you, the devil claim you as his own, and you be cast away for ever. Take heed, lest you go down to the pit from the land of Bibles, and in the full light of Christ's Gospel.

2. My second word of application shall be an invitation. I address it to all who are not yet true believers. I say to you, Come and join the one true church without delay. Come and join yourselves to the Lord Jesus Christ in an everlasting covenant not to be forgotten. Come to Christ and be saved. The day of decision must come some time. Why not this very evening? Why not to-day, while it is called to-day?—Why not this very night, ere the sun rises to-morrow morning?—Come to Him, whose I am, and whom I serve. Come to my Master, Jesus Christ. Come, I say, for all things are now ready. Mercy is ready for you, heaven is ready for you, angels are ready to rejoice over you, Christ is ready to receive you. Christ will receive you gladly, and welcome you among his children. Come into the ark—the flood of God's wrath will soon break upon the earth—come into the ark and be safe.

Come into the life-boat. The old world will soon break into pieces! Hear you not the tremblings of it? The world is but a wreck hard upon the sand-bank. The night is far-spent—the waves are beginning to rise—the winds are rising—the storm will soon shatter the

old wreck. But the life-boat is launched, and we, the ministers of the Gospel, beseech you to come into the life-boat and be saved.

Dost thou ask, How can I come, my sins are so many? Dost thou ask how thou shalt come? Hear the words of that beautiful hymn:—

“Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bid'st me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God I come.”

That is the way to come to Christ. You should come, waiting for nothing, and tarrying for nothing. You should come, as a hungry sinner, to be filled,—as a poor sinner to be enriched,—as a bad, undeserving sinner to be clothed with righteousness. So coming, Christ would receive you. “Him that cometh” to Christ, He “will in no wise cast out.” Oh! come, come to Jesus Christ.

3. Last of all, let me give a word of exhortation to my believing hearers.

Live a holy life, my brethren. Walk worthy of the church to which you belong. Live like citizens of heaven. Let your light shine before men, so that the world may profit by your conduct. Let them know whose you are, and whom you serve. Be epistles of Christ, known and read of all men; written in such clear letters, that none can say, I know not whether he be a member of Christ or not.

Live a courageous life, my brethren. Confess Christ before men. Whatever station you occupy, in that

station confess Christ. Why should you be ashamed of Him? He was not ashamed of you on the cross. He is ready to confess you now before His Father in heaven. Why should you be ashamed of Him? Be bold. Be very bold. The good soldier is not ashamed of his uniform. The true believer ought never to be ashamed of Christ.

Live a joyful life, my brethren. Live like men who look for that blessed hope—the second coming of Jesus Christ. This is the prospect to which we should all look forward. It is not so much the thought of going to heaven, as of heaven coming to us, that should fill our minds. There is a good time coming for all the people of God—a good time for all the church of Christ—a good time for all believers—a bad time for the impenitent and unbelieving—a bad time for them that will serve their own lusts, and turn their backs on the Lord, but a good time for true Christians. For that good time, let us wait, and watch, and pray.

The scaffolding will soon be taken down—the last stone will soon be brought out—the top-stone will be placed upon the edifice. Yet a little time, and the full beauty of the building shall be clearly seen.

The great master Builder will soon come himself. A building shall be shown to assembled worlds, in which there shall be no imperfection. The Saviour and the saved shall rejoice together. The whole universe shall acknowledge, that in the building of Christ's church all was well done.

“Not Corrupting the Word.”*

2 COR. II. 17.

“For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God, but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.”

MY REV. BRETHREN,

It is no light matter to speak to any assembly of immortal souls about the things of God. But the most serious of all responsibilities is, to speak to a gathering of ministers, such as that which I now see before me. The awful feeling will come across my mind, that one single word said wrong, sinking into some heart, and bearing fruit at some future time, in some pulpit, may lead to harm, of which we cannot know the extent.

* This address and the one which immediately follows it were delivered at an aggregate clerical meeting, held at Weston-Super-Mare, in August, 1858, under the presidency of Arch-deacon Law. The reader will kindly remember that neither of these addresses were written, and that he has before him a reporter's notes corrected.

But there are occasions when true humility is to be seen, not so much in loud professions of our weakness, as in forgetting ourselves altogether. I desire to forget self at this time, in turning my attention to this portion of Scripture. If I say little about my own sense of insufficiency, do me the justice to believe, that it is not because I do not feel it much.

The Greek expression, which we have translated, "corrupt," is derived from a word, the etymology of which is not quite agreed on by lexicographers. It either means a tradesman, who does his business dishonestly, or a vintner, who adulterates the wine which he exposes for sale. Wycliff renders it by an obsolete phrase—"We are not of those who do avoutry the Word of God." Tyndal renders it—"We are not of those who chop and change the Word of God." The Rhemish version is—"We are not as many, who adulterate the Word of God." In our margin we read—"We are not as many, who deal deceitfully with the Word of God."

In the construction of the sentence, the Holy Ghost has inspired St. Paul to use both the negative and the positive way of stating the truth. This mode of construction adds clearness and unmistakableness to the meaning of the words, and intensity and strength to the assertion, which they contain. Instances of a similar construction occur in three other remarkable passages of Scripture, two on the subject of baptism, one on the subject of the new birth. (John i. 13; 1 Peter i. 23; 1 Peter iii. 21.) It will be found, therefore, that there are contained in the text both negative and positive

lessons for the instruction of the ministers of Christ. Some things we ought to avoid. Others we ought to follow.

The first of the negative lessons is, a plain warning against corrupting or dealing deceitfully with the Word of God. The Apostle says, "many" do it, pointing out to us that even in his time there were those who did not deal faithfully and honestly with God's truth. Here is a full answer to those who assert that the primitive church was one of unmixed purity. The mystery of iniquity had already begun to work. The lesson which we are taught is, to beware of all dishonest statements of that Word of God which we are commissioned to preach. We are to add nothing to it. We are to take nothing away.

Now when can it be said of us, that we corrupt the Word of God in the present day? What are the rocks and shoals which we ought to shun, if we would not be of the "many" who deal deceitfully with God's truth? A few suggestions on this head may not be without use.

We corrupt the Word of God most dangerously, when we throw any doubt on the plenary inspiration of any part of Holy Scripture. This is not merely corrupting the cup, but the whole fountain. This is not merely corrupting the bucket of living water, which we profess to present to our people, but poisoning the whole well. Once wrong on this point, the whole substance of our religion is in danger. It is a flaw in the foundation. It is a worm at the root of our theology. Once allow this worm to gnaw the root, and we must not be surprised if the branches, the leaves, and the fruit, little by little

decay. The whole subject of inspiration, I am well aware, is surrounded with difficulty. All I would say is, that, in my humble judgment, notwithstanding some difficulties which we may not be able now to solve, the only safe and tenable ground to maintain is this, that every chapter, and every verse, and every word in the Bible has been "given by inspiration of God." We should never desert a great principle in theology, any more than in science, because of apparent difficulties, which we are not able at present to remove.

Suffer me to mention an illustration of this important axiom. Those conversant with astronomy know, that before the discovery of the planet Neptune, there were difficulties which greatly troubled the most scientific astronomers, respecting certain aberrations of the planet Uranus. These aberrations puzzled the minds of astronomers, and some of them suggested that they might possibly prove the whole Newtonian system to be untrue. But at that time a well-known French astronomer, named Leverrier, read before the Academy of Science a paper, in which he laid down this great axiom—that it did not become a scientific man to give up a principle because of difficulties, which could not be explained. He said in effect, "We cannot explain the aberrations of Uranus now; but we may be sure that the Newtonian system will be proved to be right, sooner or later. Something may be discovered one day, which will prove that these aberrations may be accounted for, and yet the Newtonian system remain true and unshaken." A few years after, the anxious eyes of astronomers discovered the last great planet, Neptune. The planet was shown

to be the true cause of all the aberrations of Uranus; and what the French astronomer had laid down as a principle in science, was proved to be wise and true. The application of the anecdote is obvious. Let us beware of giving up any first principle in theology. Let us not give up the great principle of plenary inspiration because of difficulties. The day may come when they will all be solved. In the mean time we may rest assured, that the difficulties which beset any other theory of inspiration, are tenfold greater than any which beset our own.

Secondly, we corrupt the word of God, when we make defective statements of doctrine. We do so, when we add to the Bible the opinions of the church, or of the fathers, as if they were of equal authority. We do so, when we take away from the Bible, for the sake of pleasing men;—or, from a feeling of false liberality, keep back any statement which seems narrow, and harsh, or hard. We do so, when we try to soften down anything that is taught about eternal punishment, or the reality of hell. We do so, when we bring forward doctrines in their wrong proportions. We have all our favourite doctrines, and our minds are so constituted, that it is hard to see one truth very clearly, without forgetting that there are other truths equally important. We must not forget the exhortation of Paul, to minister “according to the proportion of faith.” We do so, when we exhibit an excessive anxiety to fence, and guard, and qualify such doctrines as justification by faith without the deeds of the law, for fear of the charge of antinomianism; or when we flinch from strong state-

ments about holiness, for fear of being thought legal. We do so not least when we shrink from the use of Bible language in giving an account of doctrines. We are apt to keep back such expressions as "born again," "election," "adoption," "conversion," "assurance," and to use a roundabout phraseology, as if we were ashamed of plain Bible words. I cannot expand these statements, for want of time. I content myself with mentioning them, and leave them to your private thought.

In the third place, we corrupt the Word of God, when we make a defective practical application of it. We do so, when we do not discriminate between classes in our congregations—when we address all as being possessed of grace, by reason of their baptism or church-membership, and do not draw the line between those who have the Spirit and those who have not. Are we not apt to keep back plain home appeals to the unconverted? When we have eighteen hundred or two thousand persons before our pulpits, a vast proportion of whom we must know are unconverted, are we not apt to say, "Now if there be any one of you who does not know the things that are for his eternal peace"—when we ought rather to say, "If there be any of you who has not the grace of God in him?"—And are we not in danger of defective handling of the Word in our practical exhortations, by not bringing home the statements of the Bible to the various classes in our congregations? We speak plainly to the poor; but do we also speak plainly to the rich? Do we speak plainly in our dealings with the upper classes? This is a point on which, I fear, we need to search our consciences.

I now turn to the positive lessons which the text contains. "As of sincerity, as of God, in the sight of God, speak we in Christ." A few words on each head must suffice.

We should aim to speak "as of sincerity"—sincerity of aim, heart, and motive; to speak as those who are thoroughly convinced of the truth of what they say; as those who have a deep feeling and tender love for those whom we address.

We should aim to speak "as of God." We ought to strive to feel like men commissioned to speak for God, and on His behalf. In our dread of running into Romanism, we too often forget the language of the apostle—"I magnify mine office." We forget how great is the responsibility of the New Testament minister, and how awful the sin of those who, when a real messenger of Christ addresses them, refuse to receive his message, and harden their hearts against it.

We should aim to speak as "in the sight of God." We are to ask ourselves, not, What did the people think of me? but, What was I in the sight of God? Latimer was once called upon to preach before Henry VIII., and begun his sermon in the following manner. I quote from memory, and do not pretend to verbal accuracy. He began: "Latimer, Latimer, dost thou remember thou art speaking before the high and mighty King Henry VIII.; before him who has power to command thee to be sent to prison; before him who can have thy head struck off, if it please him? Wilt thou not take care to say nothing that will offend royal ears?" Then, after a pause, he went on: "Latimer! Latimer! dost

not thou remember that thou art speaking before the King of kings and Lord of lords; before Him, at whose bar Henry VIII. will stand; before Him, to whom one day thou wilt have to give account thyself? Latimer! Latimer! be faithful to thy Master, and declare all God's Word." O, that this may be the spirit in which we may ever retire from our pulpits, not caring whether men are pleased or displeased; not caring whether men say we were eloquent or feeble; but going away with the witness of our conscience—I have spoken as in God's sight.

Finally, we should aim to speak "as in Christ." The meaning of this phrase is doubtful. Grotius says, "We are to speak as in His name, as ambassadors." But Grotius is poor authority.—Beza says, "We are to speak about Christ, concerning Christ." This is good doctrine, but hardly the meaning of the words.—Others say, we are to speak as ourselves joined to Christ, as those who have received mercy from Christ, and whose only title to address others is from Christ alone.—Others say, we should speak as through Christ, in the strength of Christ. No meaning, perhaps, is better than this. The expression in the Greek exactly answers to Philipp. iv. 13: "I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me." Whatever sense we ascribe to these words, one thing is clear: we should speak in Christ, as those who have themselves received mercy; as those who desire to exalt, not themselves, but the Saviour; and as those who care nothing what men think of them, so long as Christ is magnified in their ministry.

In conclusion, we should all inquire, Do we ever

handle the word of God deceitfully? Do we realize what it is to speak as of God, as in the sight of God, and in Christ? Let me put to all one searching question. Is there any text in God's Word, which we shrink from expounding? Is there any statement in the Bible which we avoid speaking about to our people, not because we do not understand it, but because it contradicts some pet notion of ours as to what is truth? If it be so, let us ask our consciences whether this be not very like handling the Word of God deceitfully.

Is there anything in the Bible we keep back for fear of seeming harsh, and of giving offence to some of our hearers? Is there any statement, either doctrinal or practical, which we mangle, mutilate, or dismember? If so, are we dealing honestly with God's Word?

Let us pray to be kept from corrupting God's Word. Let neither fear or favour of man induce us to keep back, or avoid, or change, or mutilate, or qualify any text in the Bible. Surely we ought to have holy boldness, when we speak as ambassadors of God. We have no reason to be ashamed of any statement we make in our pulpits, so long as it is Scriptural. I have often thought, that one great secret of the marvellous honour which God has put on a man, who is not in our communion, (I allude to Mr. Spurgeon)—is, the extraordinary boldness and confidence, with which he stands up in the pulpit to speak to people about their sins and their souls. It cannot be said he does it from fear of any, or to please any. He seems to give every class of hearers its portion,—to the rich and the poor, the high and the low, the peer and the peasant, the learned and

the illiterate He gives to every one plain dealing, according to God's Word. I believe that very boldness has much to do with the success which God is pleased to give to His ministry. Let us not be ashamed to learn a lesson from him in this respect. Let us go and do likewise.

“Give thyself wholly to them.”*

1 TIM. IV. 15.

“Give thyself wholly to them.”

MY REV. BRETHREN,

I need hardly remind you, that the Greek expression which we have translated, “give thyself wholly to them,” is somewhat remarkable. It would be more literally rendered, “Be in these things.” It answers to the Latin phrases, “totus in illis,” and “omnis in hōc sum.” We have nothing exactly corresponding to the expression in our language, and the words which our translators have chosen are perhaps as well calculated as any to convey the idea which was put by the Holy Ghost in St. Paul’s mind.

When the apostle says, “give thyself wholly to these things,” he seems to look at the “things” of which he had been speaking in the preceding verses, beginning

* An address delivered at the aggregate clerical meeting, at Weston-Super-Mare, in August, 1859.

with the words "Be thou an example of the believer, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity."

We have here, a mark set before the ministers of the New Testament, at which we are all to aim, and of which we must all feel we come short. Yet it is an old saying, "He that aims high is the most likely to strike high; and he that shoots at the moon, will shoot further than the man who shoots at the bush."

The apostle appears to me to suggest, that the minister must be a man of one thing—to use his own words, a "man of God." We hear of men of business, and men of pleasure, and men of science. The aim of the minister should be, to be a "man of God;" or, to employ a phrase used in some heathen countries, to be "Jesus Christ's man." An expression is sometimes used with reference to the army, which we may apply to the soldiers of the Great Captain of our salvation. Some men are said to be "drawing-room soldiers," and "carpet knights." They are said to have entered the army for the sake of the uniform, and for no other cause. But there are many of whom public opinion says, such a man is "every inch a soldier." This should be the aim which we should place before us; we should seek to be "every inch the minister of Jesus Christ." We should aim to be the same men at all times, in all positions, and places; not on Sunday only, but on week days also; not merely in the pulpit, but everywhere—in the drawing-room of the rich, by our own fire-side, and in the cottage of the poor man. There are those, of whom their congregations have said, that when they were in

the pulpit they never wished them to come out, and when they went out they never wished them to go in. May God give us all grace to lay that to heart! May we seek so to live, so to preach, so to work, so to give ourselves wholly to the business of our calling, that this bitter remark may never be made upon us. Our profession is a very peculiar one. Others have their seasons of relaxation, when they can altogether lay aside their work. This can never be done by the faithful minister of Jesus Christ. Once put on, his office must never be put off. At home, abroad, taking relaxation, going to the sea side, he must ever carry his business with him. A great lawyer could say of his official robes, "Lie there, Lord Chancellor." Such ought never to be the mind of the minister of Christ.

There are some things which the high demand of this text suggests, as needful to be followed after and practised.

It demands, firstly, entire devotion to the great work to which we are ordained. When one was commanded by the Saviour to follow Him, he replied, "Suffer me first to bury my father;" but then there came that solemn saying, "Let the dead bury their dead; but go thou and preach the Gospel."—"Suffer me first to bid them farewell who are at my house," said another; and to him there came the remarkable sentence, "No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."—"Salute no man by the way," was Christ's charge to the seventy disciples. Surely these scriptural expressions teach us, that in all our dealings in our office, we must have a high

standard. We must strive to be men of one thing—that thing being the work of Jesus Christ.

It demands, secondly, a thorough separation from the things of the world. I hold it to be of the greatest importance to keep the ministerial office, so far as we can, distinct and separate from everything that is secular. I trust we shall hear every year of fewer and fewer ministers of the Gospel who are magistrates, and fewer and fewer ministers who take part in agricultural meetings, and win prizes for fat pigs, enormous bullocks, and large crops of turnips. There is no apostolical succession in such avocations. Nor yet is this all. We should be separated from the pleasures of the world, as well as from its business. There are many innocent and indifferent amusements, for which the minister of Christ ought to have no time. He ought to say, "I have no leisure for these things. I am doing a great work, and I cannot come down."

It demands, thirdly, a jealous watchfulness over our own social conduct. We ought not to be always paying morning calls of courtesy and dining out, as others do. It will not do to say, that our Lord went to a marriage feast, and sat at meat in the pharisee's house, and therefore we may do the same. I only reply, let us go in His spirit, with His faithfulness and boldness, to say a word in season, and to give the conversation a profitable turn, and then we may go with safety. Unless we do this, we should be careful where we go, with whom we sit down, and where we spend our evenings. There was a quaint saying of John Wesley to his ministers, which Cecil quotes, as containing the germ of much

truth. "Don't aim at being thought gentlemen; you have no more to do with being gentlemen, than with being dancing-masters." Our aim should be not to be regarded as agreeable persons at the dinner table, but to be known everywhere as faithful, consistent ministers of Jesus Christ.

It demands, fourthly, a diligent redemption of time. We should give attention to reading, every day that we live. We should strive to bring all our reading to bear on our work. We ought to keep our eyes open continually, and be ever picking up matter for our sermons, as we travel by the way, as we sit by the fire-side, as we are standing on the platform at the railway station. We should be keeping in our mind's eye our Master's business, observing, noting, looking out, gathering up something that will throw fresh light on our work, and enable us to put the truth in a more striking way. He that looks out for something to learn, will always be able to learn something.

Having suggested these things, I will next proceed to ask, what will be the consequence of our giving ourselves wholly to these things? Remember, we shall not receive the praise of men. We shall be thought extreme, and ascetic, and righteous over much. Those who want to serve God and serve mammon at the same time, will think our standard too high, our practice too stringent. They will say, that we are going too far and too fast for a world such as that in which we live. May we never care what men say of us, so long as we walk in the light of God's Word! May we strive and pray to be wholly independent of, and indifferent to

man's opinion, so long as we please God ! May we remember the woe pronounced by our Master, when he said, "Woe be unto you, when all men shall speak well of you," and the words of St. Paul, "If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ."

But though "giving ourselves wholly to these things" we shall not win the praise of men, we shall attain the far more important end of usefulness to souls. I acknowledge to the full, the doctrine of the sovereignty of God in the salvation of sinners. I acknowledge that those who preach best, and live nearest to God, have not always been honoured in their lives to the saving of many souls. But still, the man who is most entirely and wholly Jesus Christ's man—a man of one thing, who lives Sunday and week-day, everywhere, at home and abroad, as a man whose single endeavour is to give himself to the work of Jesus Christ—this is the man, this is the minister, who will generally, in the long run, do most good. The case of Mr. Simeon will apply here. You all know how he was persecuted, when he began to testify for Christ in Cambridge. You know how many there were who would not speak to him, how the finger of scorn was pointed at him continually. But we know how he went on persevering in the work, and how, when he died, all Cambridge came forth to give him honour, and how heads of houses, and fellows of colleges, and men who had scoffed at him while he lived, honoured him at his death. They testified, that the life he had lived had had its effect, and that they had seen and known that God was with him. I once saw in Dundee one who had known much of that godly man,

Robert McCheyne. She told me that those who read his letters and sermons had a very faint idea of what he was. She said to me, "If you have read all his works, you just know nothing at all about him. You must have seen the man, and heard him, and known him, and have been in company with him, to know what a man of God he was."

Furthermore, giving ourselves wholly to these things will bring happiness and peace to our consciences. I speak now amongst friends, and not amongst worldly people, where I should need to fence and guard and explain what I mean. I shall not be suspected of holding justification by works by those I see before me. I speak of such a good conscience as the apostle refers to: We trust we have a "good conscience." (Heb. xiii. 18.) To have this good conscience is clearly bound up with high aims, high motives, a high standard of ministerial life and practice. I am quite sure, that the more we give ourselves wholly to the work of the ministry, the more inward happiness, the greater sense of the light of God's countenance, are we likely to enjoy.

The subject is a deeply humbling one. Who does not feel, "My leanness, my leanness! my unprofitableness! how far short I come of this high standard!" What reason have we, having received mercy, not to faint! What reason have we, having been spared by God's long suffering, to abound in the work of the Lord, and to give ourselves wholly to our business! The grand secret is, to be ever looking to Jesus, and living a life of close communion with him. At Cambridge, the other day,

I saw a picture of Henry Martyn, bequeathed by Mr. Simeon to the public library. A friend informed me that that picture used to hang in Mr. Simeon's room, and that when he was disposed to trifle in the work of the ministry, he used to stand before it and say, "It seems to say to me, Charles Simeon, don't trifle, don't trifle; Charles Simeon, remember whose you are, and whom you serve." And then the worthy man, in his own peculiar way, would bow respectfully, and say, "I will not trifle, I will not trifle; I will not forget."

May we, in conclusion, look to a far higher pattern than any man—Martyn, M'Cheyne, or any other. May we look to the Great Chief Shepherd, the great pattern, in whose steps we are to walk! May we abide in Him, and never trifle! May we hold on our way, looking to Jesus, keeping clear of the world, its pleasures, and its follies,—caring nothing for the world's frowns, and not much moved by the world's smiles,—looking forward to that day, when the Great Shepherd shall give to all who have done His work, and preached His gospel, a crown of glory that fadeth not away! The more we have the mind of Christ, the more we shall understand what it is to "give ourselves wholly to these things."

What is Our Position ?*

MY REVEREND BRETHREN,

I trust that I may confidently bespeak your indulgence, and claim an interest in your prayers. I address you at the close of a meeting of unparalleled interest, which has now lasted for two days. Your minds are naturally wearied, after a continuous strain upon your powers of attention. The field of topics suitable to an occasion like the present has been already traversed by the three beloved brethren who have preceded me. Like strong reapers, they have swept that field clean, and have only left a few stray ears for me to glean behind them. Above all, I am anxious that the closing address at this meeting should in no wise mar the effect of all that has gone before. The last portion of the banquet ought to leave no ill

* The following address was delivered to a large clerical meeting, held at Weston-Super-Mare, under the presidency of Archdeacon Law, in the month of August, 1858. It was originally delivered from rough notes, and has been considerably abridged by the reporter. This must account for the elliptical and fragmentary style which it in many parts assumes.

savour on the palate. The last note of the music ought not to be out of harmony, and jar upon the ear. Once more, then, I say, help me by your prayers.

In searching for a subject which may form a suitable conclusion to our meeting, I have naturally turned to what the Puritans would have called its "uses and application." I wish to put the question to your minds,—Where are we, as evangelical members of the Church of England? What is our present position? What do the times in which we live especially demand of the evangelical clergy? What are we going to do when we leave this meeting and return to our respective homes? What new thing are we going to take up? To what practical point can we bring the whole of these proceedings?—The profound remark of Bishop Butler will naturally occur to your minds. He tells us, that passive impressions, often repeated, gradually lose all their power. Actions, on the contrary, often repeated, finally produce habits in the character. I trust the result of this clerical meeting will be *actions*, and not merely impressions. What, then, are we going to do?

I am not ashamed to speak of the *evangelical body* as a distinct and clearly defined body in the Church of England. It is an historical fact, that there always has been such a body. It flourished in the days of our Reformers, and under Jewel and his brethren in Elizabeth's time. It maintained its existence in the early days of the Stuarts. It was weakened under Archbishop Laud. It almost expired in the times of the later Stuarts, William the third, Ann, and the two first Georges. It revived in the times of William

Romaine, Henry Venn, Berridge, Grimshaw, Wesley, Whitfield, and others who laboured with them in the middle of the last century. From that time it has gone on growing, and I hope it will continue to grow a hundred and a thousand fold.

What then is the position in which the evangelical body stands at the present day? I will begin by pointing out reasons which exist for thankfulness to God for our position. I desire to look first at the blue sky.

We ought, for one thing, to be thankful for what God has done for us in the last hundred years as regards *our numbers*! Romaine used to say, that at one time he did not think he knew more than twenty ministers in the Church of England who preached the whole Gospel. Now they are numbered, not by twenties, but by hundreds, and I hope I may add, by thousands. We cannot, at the same time, shut our eyes to the fact, that the influence of the evangelical body has increased together with its numbers. Some person has said, that Exeter Hall is one of the five great estates of the realm. There are Queens, Lords, Commons, and the *Times* newspaper, and the fifth estate is Exeter Hall. We may receive the saying for what it is worth. It has truth in it. It is a striking fact, that a powerful paper like the *Times* is frequently obliged to confess that the evangelical body in the church has a voice, and a weight, and some effect on the movements of such a country as ours. An evangelical clergyman is no longer proscribed as a contemptible, fanatical person, as he used to be seventy years ago. Great statesmen have thought it worth their

while to hold out their hand to evangelical men, and to raise them to the episcopal bench. Whatever their motives were, I believe, in so doing, they did wisely and well. It is matter for thankfulness to God, that at the present moment there are more evangelical bishops on the bench than there ever were at one time since the days of the Reformation. Acceptance with men, and increase in numbers, are specially the gifts of God. We should be thankless, indeed, if we did not see in the facts I have just mentioned a cause for gratitude.

We ought, in the next place, to be thankful for the *work* which God has enabled the evangelical body to accomplish on behalf of His Gospel, by the agency of voluntary religious Societies. I refer especially to the work done at home and abroad by the Church Missionary Society, the Pastoral-Aid Society, the Jews Society, the Irish Church Missions, the Colonial Church Society, and other societies of a similar character. How much has God done by them within the last fifty years! How wonderfully they have grown and gone forward in usefulness, and increased their incomes from hundreds to thousands, and tens of thousands, and, in one or two instances, to hundreds of thousands of pounds! For all this we should thank God. He alone has power over the hearts of men. He alone can incline men to give their money in order to spread Christ's truth. He has proved, that He can raise up friends for His work notwithstanding the weakness, the infirmity, and the shortcomings of His people.

We ought, in the next place, to thank God for the readiness which He has put into the hearts of men to

devise *new machinery*, to meet the wants of the times. We should be thankful for the rise and progress of open air preaching. We should be thankful for the general confidence reposed in lay agency. I, for one, am glad to see the laity taking their proper place, and working side by side with the clergy, as coadjutors, not as rivals, in the cause of God. I regard any agency without the slightest feeling of jealousy. I would not check the zeal of any Christian fellow-workman, because he is not ordained. I would rather say with Moses, "Forbid him not. Would God that all the Lord's people" would come forward and work. There is work for all. Laymen, no doubt, in working for Christ, sometimes make mistakes, or overstep their province. Like their ministers, they are no more infallible than the Pope. But do their ministers never make mistakes, or overstep their proper province? I verily believe the working clergy make more mistakes than the working laity. For the agency of the laity—for the new boldness with which the laity have come forward to be the helpers and aiders of the clergy, we ought, indeed, to be thankful to God.

We ought, in the next place, to thank God for the passing of the *Religious Worship Act*. This was a measure, which, having passed the house of Commons without opposition, met with fierce opposition in the Upper House, in a quarter where it was to be expected. Yet, having raised up the Protestant feeling of the country, it passed with acclamation. In spite of every prediction, it has hitherto done no harm to the Church of England. So far from doing harm it has strengthened

the Church immensely. It has broken fetters which never ought to have been imposed on ministers of the Gospel. It has given us a liberty which an extreme caution had too long withheld, the glorious liberty of doing good in our parishes, no man making us afraid. I regard the Religious Worship Act as the greatest boon which our Church has received since the days of the Reformation.

One more feature in our position I cannot pass over. We ought to be deeply thankful for the rise and progress of *special services* on behalf of the working classes. And here I may be allowed to bear testimony to the value of such meetings as those which we have now the privilege to attend. Many of my rev. brethren may not be aware of the origin of the special services of the last two years. They arose entirely and exclusively out of the last clerical meeting, held in this very room, in Weston-super-mare. If these clerical meetings had done no more good than that, they have at least done one thing which will stand as a monument of their usefulness, in souls saved and God glorified, as long as the world endures. On the last day of that meeting, there met in one corner of the drawing-room of the Ven. Archdeacon, who presided, Dr. M'Neile, Dr. Miller, and myself, to talk over what should be the practical result of the meeting. I proposed the question, In what way are we to adjust the conflicting claims of duty? I remarked that we could not preach or speak everywhere. I asked what was the best method of economizing our strength, and spending ourselves to the best purpose? Dr. M'Neile said, "Let every man find

out his proper work, and that work let him do—preaching, speaking, or lecturing.”—Dr. Miller said, “Why not attempt this? Let us open some large church in one of our great towns, and have special sermons five or six nights running, throwing open the pews, and inviting the working-classes to come without distinction, simply to hear the Gospel of Christ!” Dr. M’Neile at once agreed to it with all his heart. Dr. Miller said he would offer St. Martin’s Church, Birmingham, for the occasion, and invited Dr. M’Neile and myself to assist in the work. The thing was attempted, within three months, in November, 1856, and I need hardly remind you that the success was complete. In spite of many a prediction of failure, it was clearly proved that when you go out of your routine path to meet the working-classes, they will come and meet you. For six successive nights, to the astonishment of many, the huge Church of St. Martin’s, Birmingham, was filled with attentive, hearing congregations. That week, one of the most important movements of the last few years was set on foot. It went on from town to town, from Birmingham to Ipswich, and from Ipswich to Islington, and from Islington to Exeter Hall. Nothing, to my mind, is a more convincing evidence that special services are a step in the right direction, than the fact that the prince of this world has sought in every way to mar the good effect of the movement, and to turn it into an instrument for doing harm.

That these movements, which all began with the evangelical body, are not without their effect on the public mind, the conduct of our adversaries is a plain

proof. The cry has often been raised in times gone by, that the "Church was in danger." Lay agency, and open-air preaching, and special services, were to prove her ruin! Such a cry has repeatedly been raised; but the Church still survives. The dangers of the Church do not arise from the evangelical body, but from those who eat her bread and yet maintain doctrines contradictory to her Articles. But now we see the very things once condemned taken up by those who opposed them. Lay agency is used even by our adversaries. Even in cathedrals and abbeys are to be heard sermons addressed to the working classes. Our movements are effective, even our enemies being judges. When all these things are remembered, there is indeed great cause of thankfulness. We cannot look to these facts, and not feel that God has yet an elect people in the Church of England. Who can tell but there may be in store even greater mercies than these? God seems to be saying, "Destroy her not, for a blessing is in her." Surely if we are not thankful for all these mercies, the very stones will cry out.

I must next pass to the other side of the question. There are black clouds as well as blue sky in the position of the evangelical body in the Church of England. There are many dangers around us, as well as things for which to thank God and take courage.

One of the chief dangers of the day is the firm hold which *Tractarianism* has on a large portion of the clergy, and not a small portion of the laity. We must not suppose that Tractarianism is extinct. Newman, and Manning, and Oakley, and Ward, have gone to

Rome, but they have left behind a leaven which still works, and will work, in the hearts of many of the clergy and the laity. I believe that people do not sufficiently estimate the power which Tractarianism has over a large body in the Church of England. It does not come forward so prominently as it once did, but it is not the less dangerous. Its influence just now, is seen in the unscriptural doctrines put forth respecting the Lord's Supper,—in the secret efforts that are made in some quarters to introduce the Romish confessional, and in the wide-spread taste for histrionic ceremonies, and Popish habiliments in the performance of public worship. Its progress appears in the immense difficulty there is in getting satisfactory curates when they are wanted. How rare and hard to find they are! How often, after writing to friends, and advertising in the *Record*, evangelical clergymen are obliged to put up with curates not established in the faith, and not up to the mark, simply because no others are to be met with. The theological training of young men, preparing for orders in the present day, is often most unsatisfactory and dangerous. It does not build them up in the principles of the Reformation, but places them on an inclined plane, of which the logical conclusion is neither more nor less than Romanism.

One of the next dangers of the day arises from the rise and progress of *Neologian principles* in the church. There are some who are called Church-of-England men, who publicly and privately put forward strange and unscriptural views about the atonement, about the vicarious sacrifice of Christ, and about His substitution for

us on the cross. There are clergymen in England, who hold strange views about inspiration, and the eternity of punishment which Scripture speaks of as being the desert of unbelief. These men go on unrebuked. No effort is made to put them out of the Church. The sentimental, the semi-liberal, the would-be-called charitable, say that there is something so loving, tender, and kind about the doctrine, that none can be lost, but that all will be saved, that they cannot but admire it. The rise and spread of this school is indeed a great evil in the present day, and demands the most anxious attention of the evangelical clergy.

One of the next great dangers of the day arises from the spirit of *false liberalism*—a morbid love of unity, falsely so called. No doubt we all love unity; but we must distinctly maintain, that true unity can only be built on God's truth. No doubt we must not withhold the right hand of fellowship from any faithful brother, because he does not think exactly like us; but we must understand who the men are to whom we extend the right hand. Many are saying now a days, that "after all, there is no great difference between one clergyman and another. Some speak of a thing by one name, and some by another; but, after all, they mean the same." It is not uncommon now to hear of high churchmen saying to evangelical clergymen—as was said in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, by Sanballat and Tobiah—"Let us build with you." But let us not be taken in by such sophistry. Better build by ourselves—better let the work go on slowly—than allow Sanballat and Tobiah to come and build by our side. I believe that all communion of that

sort, all interchange of pulpits with unsound men, is to be deprecated, as doing nothing but harm to the cause of God. I believe that, by so doing, we endorse the sentiments of persons who have no real love of Christ's truth. We enable the high church party to manufacture ecclesiastical capital out of the evangelical clergy, and to make people believe that we are all one in heart, when, in reality, we differ on first principles. From such unity and co-operation may we pray to be delivered.

Another great danger in the present day arises from the proceedings of our *rulers and legislators*. Can there be any doubt in the mind of any intelligent observer of the times, that little by little we are casting off, as a nation, the religion of the Bible, the public national acknowledgment of the Lord Jesus Christ? There are those who cannot see it; but I cannot read public events with their eyes. I have always strongly opposed the endowment of Maynooth. I deeply deplore the admission of the Jews in Parliament, and regard it as an insult to our Saviour. I see no force in the arguments brought forward in its favour. No public opinion can make that right, which is wrong in the sight of God. A thing may be politically right, and expedient, and popular, but if scripturally wrong, we ought not to touch it with the tip of our fingers. Once admit the Jew, and where are we to stop? Admit the Jew, and I know not why some eminent Parsee, should not some day take his seat in the House of Commons side by side with Mr. Disraeli. Admit the Jew, and I do not see why some Hindoo Brahmin or Mahometan, who has done service to the state, should not take his

seat for some borough, as its representative in the British Parliament. I view with deep regret the assault made on the church in the matter of church-rates. The amount of money is not the question at stake. It is the principle which is involved. The principle is, that a nation ought to provide for the maintenance of God's worship, and that there should be a charge on property for this purpose. This principle many of our great men are disposed to give up. I am firmly convinced it is the thin edge of a wedge, which is to split in sunder the union of church and state in the land.

I wish that I could conclude the catalogue of our national short-comings at this point. But unhappily I cannot. I observe with painful feelings the language used in both Houses of Parliament by eminent statesmen about India, and the position we ought to occupy there. I see a disposition to regard all creeds as alike, and to speak of shasters and vedas as having the same authority as the Word of God. I see it questioned whether the Bible should be taught in schools maintained by national money in India. When I see all this, I think that coming events are casting their shadows before. There are unmistakeable premonitory symptoms of a great political crisis. There is a plain tendency to effect a separation between the church of Christ and the Government of England. The time is drawing near when the question will have to be decided, whether the country, as a country, and the government, as a government, shall recognize Christianity at all. There is in all this imminent danger. I say these things, not because I fear for the true Church of Christ,

or for the Church of England, so long as she is faithful to her principles, and so long as her clergy stand by the Word of God. But I say these things as an Englishman who loves his country, and who sees in the separation of Church and State evil to England,—no great harm to the true interests of Christ's cause, but great harm to the land, as a land, and to the nation, as a nation. I believe that God will be displeased; and that when God is displeased with a nation, He has but to put forth His finger, and that nation shall pass away. To use the words of Dr. Owen, "If the rulers of a nation say, they have nothing to do with religion, God will quickly manifest that He has nothing to do with them." It is a solemn saying in God's word, "Amalek was the first among the nations, but his latter end shall be, that he perish for ever."

Having now dwelt upon the position of the evangelical body, both as regards its reasons for thankfulness, and its reasons for alarm, I am desirous to impress upon my brethren the question, What use are we going to make of all that we have heard at the meeting of this week? What practical lessons are we going to carry away for our future conduct as ministers of Christ? I will first mention a few things which we ought to attend to individually, and then a few which we ought to attend to collectively.

With respect to individual duty, I will first remark, that it is of great importance from time to time to recall to our minds the *real nature of our work*. We should remember constantly the great ideal of what a Christian minister ought to be, sketched out in the sixth chapter

of the Acts: "We will give ourselves to the Word of God and to prayer." The preaching and expounding of the Word of God, with nothing added, and with nothing taken away, is beyond all doubt our principal business. But after that, we must never forget private prayer. It was said by an old writer that Luther's habits of private prayer, and John Bradford's habits of private prayer, were things more talked of than practised and imitated. Private prayer is one grand secret of the strength of the ministry. It is here that the roots of the ministry, practically speaking, are to be found. The ministry of the man who has gifts, however great, but who does not give the closet the principal place, must sooner or later become jejune and ineffective. At the same time we must take heed that we give due honour to the Word of God in our public ministrations. A thousand things continually call us away from this—committees, schools, lectures, visiting, and the like. But we must remember, that we are ministers of the Word of God—that our province is the Word of God—and that we must be very careful how we leave the Word of God to serve tables.

I will remark, in the next place, that it is of immense importance that we should take heed to *our own lives*. I have been lately studying the lives and private habits of those men whom God raised up to be the revivers of the Church of England in the last century. I have been much struck with their self-denial, and entire devotedness to the work of the ministry. They were men who lived very plainly and simply, and did not seem to care much for anything but their work.

They were not diners out. They were not men who sought the entertainments of the great and the rich. We should do well to consider whether we are living as near to God as they did.

I will remark, in the next place, that we must take heed that we do not neglect our *pulpit preparation*. The matter and style of our sermons must be equal to the demands of the times. Ignorant and unlearned people may perhaps put up with anything in the way of preaching, but the more the people are trained by means of teachers and libraries, the more need there is to take heed to our preaching, in order that the pulpit of the Church of England may not fall behind the times. There is danger on this point. Some may be ready to say at the end of the week, "I have been working for God the whole of the week.—I have been attending the school, visiting from house to house, distributing tracts, making speeches, delivering lectures; and if my sermons on Sunday are not quite what they might be, at any rate I have not been idle."—We should remember, that all work of this description, if it trenches on the preparation of our sermons, is work ill-spent. It is no excuse in the sight of God, if our sermons on Sundays are poor, because we have been working so hard all the week. What costs little is worth little. If a man comes to his Bible on the Saturday, takes the first text that occurs to him, puts a few thoughts together, and then, trusting to his extempore powers, goes with that preparation only into the pulpit the next morning, we must not be surprised if the people complain of sameness in their pastor's ministrations. There

never was a period when the pulpit demanded more preparation, more serious, hearty, studious preparation, at the hand of all God's faithful ministers.

I will remark, in the next place, that we all need to be more careful in the employment of *our time*. There is a danger of trying to do too much. Some clergymen have so many irons in the fire that it is impossible to keep them all hot. A few things well done are far better than twenty ill done. The man whose work will stand the longest, is the man who, whatever people may say, however lazy they may call him, determines that he will not do more than he can do well, that he will not attempt more work than he can really do, and that he will not start more machinery than he can keep steadily going.

I will remark, in the next place, that it deserves serious consideration, whether we give sufficient attention to *reading and study*, in the present day. By all means let us put the Bible first, chief, and foremost, and make it our principal study. But I should be sorry if it came to be said that the ministers of the Church of England were ignorant men. I do not mean by the reading which I refer to, such reading as would lead us away from the Bible, but such as would help to the study and understanding of it. I do not mean that we ought to read things which do not throw light on the Word of God. But I do say that, in the multiplicity of our engagements, there is great danger of forgetting that reading makes a "full man," and neglect of reading makes an empty one. Sorry should I be if the evangelical clergy of the Church of England were to get the character of

being men who read little, and took little pains to add new things to old. I am sure that Mr. Venn will not say that his grandfather was not a reading man. No one will say that James Hervey was not a reading man. Of John Berridge, it was said, that there was no man in Cambridge who was better read on all subjects than he was: I must plainly give it as my opinion that clergymen who think there is no occasion for reading and study make a great mistake, and are likely to bring the ministry into great contempt. We ought to be familiar with books which throw light on our great work, and we ought to make time to read them.

I wish, finally, to say a few words on our duty, not only individually, but collectively. For one thing, we ought, if possible, to keep up *more union* among ourselves, from one end of the kingdom to the other. Here is the great value of these clerical meetings. I hope that, ere long, there will not be a county where there is not such a meeting as that which we have attended this week. I do not see why we should not, in every county, collect together our little companies of ten, fifteen, or twenty evangelical clergymen once every year, and take counsel together about the things of the common Gospel in which we are concerned. I hope that the idea will be taken up, and that we shall hear of the example set here, being carried out all over the land.

For another thing, we ought to try to improve, in some measure, the character and conduct of the *meetings* on behalf of religious societies. Persons are continually complaining, on all sides, that such meetings are not what they used to be—that they are falling

off in interest, in attendance, and in their results. Many are rising up in the Church of England—persons of knowledge, faith, and grace—who say they never go to religious meetings, because they are so unprofitable. Many say that our meetings consist of jokes about the ladies and the fair collectors, of references to this brother, and his usual eloquence, and to that speaker, with his ready facetiousness, and of compliments to everybody in turn. The upshot is, that many people are disgusted, and will not attend. This is a matter on which we ought to consider whether something cannot be done. Could there not be more solemnity, and vigour, and pith, and power about our meetings? Could there not be more co-operation and arrangement among speakers, one taking up this point, and another that? Could not each bring something that costs something, and has taken time in the preparation? These things seem trifling to some. But they are not so. Public meetings supply the only opportunity when the evangelical clergy and many of the laity are brought together. The conduct of them is a matter that ought not to be overlooked.

In the last place, I will urge you to do something towards bearing a public testimony on the important question, whether or not *the state shall recognize Christianity*, or cast it aside altogether. The India bill has forced the subject on us. A hundred and fifty millions of persons have been adopted and brought in as part of the British empire. On what principle are they to be ruled? The East India Company being cast aside, and the Queen being now the governor of all that vast

continent of Hindostan, are we to go among the people and say, practically, that we have left our Bibles and our Christianity at home? It is a matter of great importance. I trust that none will fail to stir up their congregations and their parishes upon it, and to let the government know what a large body of the English people think respecting the future government of India. Surely we have a right to demand these three things: that the government shall not be ashamed to make the Bible an indispensable part of the instruction given in all schools maintained by them—that caste shall not be made a disqualification for having employment under the state—that there shall be a thorough repudiation of any union between the government and idolatry in any form, directly or indirectly, in short that England shall have nothing to do with Indian idolatry. If government seems disposed to encourage neutrality, the ministers of the Church of England must not be guilty of the neutrality of being ashamed of Christianity. I hope that we shall be awake to the times in which we live, and shall endeavour to stir up the country, to make some public declaration about what we desire government to do, and what we protest against being done, in the new empire of Hindostan.

We are living in troublous times. There are dangers ahead, which ought to turn every Christian heart to the sanctuary, crying, "O Lord, spare us; O Lord, spare thy people, and give us thy blessing." These are not times in which men ought to get into their little parishes, and say they care not what goes on outside that ditch, or that wall, or that lane, which is the boundary of

their parish. We must have public feelings, and do our duty, and take our part against the common foes by which the Church of England is in danger of being assailed. We must bear the kind of testimony which Jeremiah was called to bear in his time. We must not suppose that anything will do except fighting,—not fighting with carnal weapons, but with the sword of the Spirit.—We must earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints. All like peace and quietness. It is pleasant to sit under our own vine and fig-tree. But the times in which we live will not allow us to sit still. We must remember the Lord's word, "Think not that I come to send peace, but a sword;" and the injunction which He once gave, "He that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one." It is hard to be ever fighting. But our forefathers won the Reformation through dangers, and we must strive to keep it, and hand it down to our descendants, whatever dangers we have to pass through.

I will ask one favour in behalf of the brethren who have done the principal part of the labour in the meeting now nearly concluded.—We ask a special place in your intercessory prayers. You should consider the position in which we are placed. We are often put forward into positions which others perhaps would fill just as well, if they would but make the trial, and are deeply sensible of our own deficiencies. But still, being put forward in the forefront of the battle, we may surely ask for a special place in your prayers. We are only flesh and blood. We are men of like passions with yourselves. We have our private trials, and our special temptations. Often, while watering the vineyards of

others, our own is comparatively neglected. Surely it is not too much to ask you to pray for us. Pray that we may be kept humble and sensible of our own weakness, and ever mindful that in the Lord alone can we be strong.—Pray that we may have wisdom to take the right step, to do the right thing in the right way, and to do nothing to cause the Gospel to be blamed. Pray, above all, that we may go straight on, even unto the end—that we may never lose our first love, and go back from first principles,—that it may never be said of us, that we are not the men we once were, but that we may go on consistently and faithfully, die in harness, and “finish our course with joy, and the ministry which we have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God.”

In conclusion, I will remind you of the words which the Apostle addressed to the Ephesian elders: “I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace.” We are about to part, perhaps to meet no more in this world. Let us solemnly commend one another to God, and to the word of His grace, as that which will never err, never fail us, never lead us astray. Guided by that word as our light and lamp, we shall at last receive an inheritance among them that are sanctified. Above all, let us never forget the advice which Whitefield gave in one of his letters, let us “make much of our Lord Jesus Christ.” There are many things of which we may easily make too much in our ministry, give them too much attention, think about them too much. But we can never make too much of Christ.

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